THE

# BRITISH CICERO;

OR,

## A SELECTION

OF THE

## *MOST ADMIRED SPEECHES*

IN THE

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

ARRANGED UNDER THREE DISTINCT HEADS OF POPULAR, PARLIAMENTARY, AND JUDICIAL ORATORY:

WITH HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS:

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF ELOQUENCE.

BY THOMAS BROWNE, LL. D.

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——Quid facundia posset
Re patuit.—— OVID. MET. Lib. XIII.

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# ADVERTISEMENT.

To descant at large on the utility of a Work of this nature, would, it is presumed, be deemed superfluous; yet, it is somewhat remarkable, that, among the numerous tasteful and judicious selections, from our most approved and celebrated writers, for the instruction and edification of youth, a work similar to the present, has not been arranged from the numerous specimens of oratory occasionally exhibited by those Statesmen, Barristers, &c. who have, from time to time, so eminently dignified the Senate and the Forum.—It cannot be denied but that Britain, as well as Greece and Rome, has had her Demostheneses and her Ciceros. Upon this ground then, the Editor presumes that a collection of the most polished orations of our Public Speakers, on different political and judicial subjects, will not prove unacceptable to the British Student, as calculated, at once, to infuse the spirit of true Eloquence, and the genuine principles of the constitution.—Having such models as a Chatham, a Burke, a Fox, a Pitt, a Sheridan, &c. in the Senate, and a Mansfield, an Erskine, a Curran, &c. at the Bar, he must be roused to an admiration of their genius, if not to

an emulation of their example. The Editor therefore supposes that it will be sufficient to inform the Reader, that his principal aim has been to make choice of those Speeches on the different subjects of legiflation and jurisprudence which have chiefly occupied the attention of the Public, and have added great celebrity to those Members of the Senate and the Bar who delivered them.—The matter of the three Volumes comprehends the space of about forty years, and is brought down nearly to the present period.—Should the work meet the approbation of the Public, the Editor proposes, in a fecond Edition, to enlarge it, and continue it to the time of Publication.—An Introduction to the study and practice of Eloquence, accompanied by some critical observations on Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic, is prefixed.

Private Seminary,
Wright's Buildings, Kensington,
Aug. 2d, 1808.

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# INTRODUCTION.

If a multitude of rules could quicken the progress of the mind in any useful or elegant pursuit, there is no talent which would have been sooner carried to perfection than that of Eloquence, because there is none for the improvement of which Art has furnished us with so great a variety, or rather with so endless a detail of instructions. But we find, on the contrary, that the continually increasing number of rhetorical systems, and of critical observations, has a greater tendency to retard than to accelerate the career of genius; and that, even in the present boasted age of reason and refinement, the accomplished orator is as uncommon and extraordinary a character as in the days of PERICLES and DEMOSTHENES, when

——" resistless Eloquence
" Wielded at will the fierce Democracy,
" Shook th' arsenal, and fulmin'd o'er Greece,
" To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."

At the close of that brilliant period, which produced so many illustrious candidates for the palm of excellence in every species of composition, the decline of oratory was first owing to pedantry, affectation, and false taste;—to the subtilties of ARISTOTLE and his microscopic views of language;—to the profusion of artificial ornaments, which

DEMETRIUS PHALEREUS introduced in the room of beautiful simplicity and natural grandeur;—to the critic who chained down to earth the soaring pinion of genius, and to the popular speaker, who gave a wrong bias to public opinion in favour of the dazzling allurements of novelty.

Let it not be supposed that I am insensible of the merit of ARISTOTLE, whose acuteness, ſolidity, and accuracy have seldom been equalled, and never surpassed by any other writer. I view with peculiar admiration his grand outline of Natural History, as well as the immense materials which he collected with unwearied industry, and which he arranged with exquisite judgment, in the execution of his plan. Had he only reduced into proper order all the scattered knowledge of his time on ſuch a variety of subjects, we ſhould feel ourselves under very great obligations to him; but the richness of his own fund far surpassed all that he could borrow from others; and though, in the amazing number of his original experiments and practical obſervations, we find some which have not been confirmed in later ages, yet it muſt be acknowledged that they served as uſeful guides to succeeding inquirers into the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

But the information and assistance which Students in Natural History derived from the researches of ARISTOTLE, have been more than counterbalanced by the pernicious effects of his other writings on the Art of Poetry, on Rhetoric, on Logic, and Metaphysics, which have puzzled the world ever since, and have really done far greater injury to polite literature, to philosophy, and eloquence, than all the dreadful ravages of the Goths and Vandals. These could only destroy some of the noblest incentives to emulation, the books, the records, the precious monuments of antiquity; but were unable to cramp and fetter the powers of the mind which produced such works. The

darkness spread by the barbarians, was temporary; but the twilight of false learning, or rather the spirit of subtile disquisition, which found its way into the schools with the works of ARISTOTLE, gave rise to a more lasting and more incurable evil than ignorance—the silly conceit of pedantry. I am sorry to add, that too many relics of this absurd system are still preserved, though experience has fully demonstrated, that youthful genius, if confined for a series of years to the *go-cart* of old academical institutions, will scarcely ever be able to walk alone with manly grace and dignity.

As I ventured to ascribe the first corruptions of genuine eloquence, even in the golden age of Grecian literature, to DEMETRIUS PHALEREUS, as well as to ARISTOTLE, I must now endeavour to do the same strict justice to the Orator, which I hope I have already done to the Critic, not suffering my admiration of the talents of either to make me overlook the baneful influence of their example. I am ready to confefs that DEMETRIUS was eminently qualified to rival the moft applauded orators who had gone before him. CICERO describes him as a man of greater learning than any of them, but as fitter to appear on the parade than in the field: he marched forth into the dust and heat of the forum, not from a weather-beaten tent, but from the shady recess of erudition: he was the first who relaxed the force of eloquence, and gave her a foft and tender air, choosing rather to be agreeable than to be great or striking—to amuse his hearers rather than to warm their minds, or to inflame their passions—to impress them with a high opinion of his elegance, not, as was said of PERICLES, to *sting*, as well as to *please*.

Such is the character given of DEMETRIUS by CICERO *: QUINTILIAN speaks of him nearly in the same

* De claris Oratoribus.

terms*; and DENINA, the ingenious Essayist on the Revolutions of Literature, comes still nearer to the point which I wish to inculcate, in his remark, "that DEMETRIUS, though no wise inferior to any of his predecessors, yet perceiving that the proper path of oratory was become trite, resolved to be the first or only follower of a new species of rhetoric, rather than by imitating others to remain undistinguished: he therefore addicted himself to a figurative, flowery, polished, but soft and effeminate style, which univerfally pleased by its novelty, and in him, indeed, animated by the force and vivacity of uncommon genius, had some merit; but the herd of imitators quickly sunk into the utmost languor, and extinguished every spark of true eloquence." Thus affectation completed what pedantry had begun; and Greece, alternately torn by intestine divisions, and enslaved by foreign tyrants, never after exhibited, but at very short intervals, even a transient gleam of its former glory.

Eloquence was not so rapid in her advances to perfection at Rome as she had been at Greece; but she retained somewhat longer her native charms and unimpaired energy. Could we suppose that the Speech over the dead body of LUCRETIA, ascribed to JUNIUS BRUTUS by LIVY, had been really the composition of the Orator, and not of the Historian, we should be surprised at the little progrefs which Eloquence made from that splendid beginning of the Roman republic till the termination of the Punic wars. But LIVY, a writer of the most lively fancy and vigorous genius, never let slip an opportunity of making a masterly harangue, suited to the importance of the occasion, and to the character of the supposed speaker, thus animating the narrative, without doing any material injury to truth. We may however observe, in CICERO's sketch of illustri-

* DEMETRIUS primus inclinasse eloquentiam dicitur.

ous

ous orators, how thinly they were scattered through the long period here alluded to. He accounts for it on this principle, that an emulation to shine in all the splendors of language is not usually found among a people who are either employed in settling the form of their government, or engaged in war, or struggling with difficulties, or subjected to arbitrary power *. The Romans, indeed, had soon shaken off this last restraint; but they were afterwards involved in contests with their neighbours, in the still worse convulsions of domestic faction, and in those dreadful wars with the Carthaginians, the longest in their duration, and the least interrupted in their continuance, of any that are recorded in ancient history.

It is therefore from the destruction of Carthage, and from the consequent security and independence of Rome, that we must date the first grand effulgence of her genius, which continued to beam forth with increasing lustre from that era till the united extinction of eloquence and liberty under the CÆSARS. How just is the observation of CICERO, who cannot be too often quoted upon this subject, that Eloquence is the attendant of peace, the companion of ease and prosperity, and the tender offspring of a free and well-established constitution †! We may add, that she cannot long survive the loss of any of these blessings, but least of all that of perfect freedom, which is so essential to her existence. She felt, however, the enervating effects of pedantic instruction and of false refinements, before she sunk under the deadly influence of despotism. Among the number of Greek emigrants, who had fled to Rome for security and support, a great many taught Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, and all those perplexing systems, which never fail to destroy or enfeeble originality, by attempting to reduce into an art what had before

* De claris Oratoribus. † Ibid.



been

been the offspring of genius and nature. ARISTOTLE was the text-book made use of by the several professors; and young minds, thus entangled, at the very commencement of their studies, in the intricacies and thorny disquisitions of the schools, could seldom rise above mediocrity.

The models of fine writing, the master-pieces of beautiful and animated composition, which were found in the Greek language, served in some measure to counteract the pedantry introduced with the study of it, and, in youth of great talents, to kindle the flame of generous emulation. The elder ANTHONY, CRASSUS, HORTENSIUS, CÆSAR, and CICERO rivalled the glory of the most celebrated Grecian orators, but left far behind them such of their own countrymen as paid more attention to the precepts of ARISTOTLE than to the example of DEMOSTHENES. We are told by CICERO himself, that he came forth an orator—not from the schools of the Rhetoricians,—but from the spacious walks of the Academy, which he considers as the theatres of diversified and extensive argument,—as the sources whence Eloquence derived all her fertility and all her materials *.

Yet, even CICERO in his old age, after having exhibited the most finished pattern of Roman eloquence, and raised the literature of his country to such perfection, that he alone might be opposed to PLATO and DEMOSTHENES, seems to have been desirous of distinguishing himself as an ARISTOTLE also, the substance of whose Art of Rhetoric he presented to the Romans in a Latin dress, and thereby increased the fondness for preceptive details which was so general in his time. How much more entitled to our admiration does he appear in his *Notices of eminent Orators*, and his *Character of the accomplished Speaker*, both which inestimable works are calcu-

* Orat. ad Brut.

lated

lated to form the taste of youth, and to animate as well as to direct their exertions in the study and attainment of genuine eloquence.

The prevalence of pedantry at Rome was quickly followed by a decline of true taste, by a contempt of simplicity and nature, and by the substitution of false and affected beauties. Before the close of AUGUSTUS's reign, a certain effeminacy of style insinuated itself at court; and the malignant criticisms of ASINIUS POLLIO, and of his son ASINIUS GELLIUS, on the language and compositions of CICERO, greatly conduced to wean the Romans, as DENINA expresses it, from that great fountain of Latin oratory. Eloquence was no longer to be seen in an elegant undress, but was always tricked, and flounced, and highly decorated with the studied graces of novelty, or the attractive glitter of points, of witticisms, allusions, and conceits. The want of real dignity was supplied by a pompous strut; and artificial flowers were profusely scattered to conceal the decay of Nature's sweetest blooms.

But the gradual corruptions of oratory might still have admitted of some corrective or reform, had not the liberty of speech in the Senate, in the Forum, in all popular Assemblies been destroyed by the establishment of despotism at Rome; and had not all the remaining powers of enslaved genius been constantly exerted in strains of fulsome adulation, and in adorning with the splendors of gaudy panegyric the pretended blessings of every tyrant's reign. It is not under the government of such men, or rather of such monsters as a TIBERIUS, a CALIGULA, a CLAUDIUS, or a NERO, that we are to look for any remains of solid eloquence. In contemplating such sad periods of human degradation, we feel the same indignant emotions as HAYLEY, and exclaim with him,

"Those bane of liberal knowledge! Nature's Curse!
"Parent of misery! pamper'd vice's Nurse!
"Plunging by thy annihilating breath
"The Soul of Genius in the trance of Death;
"UNBOUNDED POWER! beneath thy baleful ſway,
"The voice of ELOQUENCE sinks in dumb decay."

In the last line, I have substituted ELOQUENCE for HISTORY, the remark being equally applicable to both, as the dignity and energy of truth, which constitute the essence of Oratory, as well as of History, can exist only in the regions of Freedom. "All other qualifications," says LONGINUS, "you may find among people who are deprived of liberty; but never did a Slave become an Orator: he can only be a *pompous Flatterer*. His spirit being effectually broken, the timorous vassal will still be uppermost: the habit of subjection continually overawes and beats down his genius. For, according to HOMER,

"JOVE fix'd it certain, that whatever day
"Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away."

"Thus, we are told, the cases, in which dwarfs are kept, not only prevent the future growth of those who are inclosed in them, but diminish what bulk they already have, by too close constriction of their parts. So slavery, be it never so easy, yet is slavery still, and may deservedly be called *the prison of the soul*, and *the public dungeon*."

In the same section of the Treatise on the Sublime, from which the above extract is taken, we find a beautiful and just picture of the happy influence of a free government, which LONGINUS considers as "the *Nurse of true Genius*. Great writers," he adds, "will be found only in this sort of government, with which they flourish and triumph, or decline and die. Liberty produces fine sentiments in men of genius: it invigorates their hopes, excites an honorable emulation,

emulation, and inspires an ambition and thirst of excelling; and, what is more, in free states there are prizes to be gained, which are worth contending for. Thus the natural faculties of the orators are sharpened and polished by continual practice; and the liberty of their thoughts, as is reasonable to expect, shines out conspicuously in the liberty of their debates*."

It is with some difficulty that I restrain myself from copying the whole section, in the latter part of which the moral causes of the corruption of genius, and of the decay of sublimity, are accurately described. But I beg leave to recommend it to the attention of every tutor; and I hope that honest zeal will prompt him to infuse its spirit into his pupils, and to impress upon their minds this important truth, That the faculties of the soul can never be completely invigorated or improved, and that genius cannot exert itself or rise to the true sublime, where virtue is neglected, and the morals are depraved.

The design of the present Introduction to the study and practice of Eloquence being to point out the chief obstacles to its progress and the principal causes of its decline, it is enough to have traced its most memorable revolutions in ancient Greece and Rome, without plunging into the darkness of ignorance and barbarism, which overspread Europe for so many ages after. The dawn or revival of letters is commonly dated from the beginning of the sixteenth century; but though Italy and France may boast of having taken the lead in various works of taste and genius, yet neither of them produced a DEMOSTHENES or a CICERO. This honor was reserved for England, whose sons, animated by the spirit of liberty, rose to the utmost heights of oratorical eminence, and have regularly consigned the elevated post to their successors for a longer

* Sect. XLIV.

period

period than ever before had been known in the history of Man. It was not however till the close of the seventeenth century, after domestic tyrants had been expelled, and the pride of foreign enemies humbled in the dust;—after proper checks had been imposed on the abuse of royal authority, and the rights and privileges of the people distinctly ascertained; that the freedom of the press and the still more uncontrolled freedom of speech in parliament gave to British Eloquence that fire, energy, and grandeur for which it has ever since been so justly admired and distinguished.

If we take a view of CICERO's highly finished gallery of oratorical portrait, and, after doing ample justice to the painter's exquisite art, come to consider the small collection of proper subjects that he discovered worthy of notice from the beginning to the termination of the Roman republic, we shall be astonished to find the first twenty or thirty years of British liberty producing a far greater number of illustrious orators than the eminent Historian of Eloquence, with all his accuracy of research and his ardent zeal for the honor of his country, could discover in its most brilliant annals for a series of five centuries. In the short reigns of King WILLIAM and Queen ANNE, we may proudly mention the names of a SOMERS, a HOLT, an ASHLEY, a MONTAGUE, a HARLEY, a ST. JOHN, a CONINGSBY, a JEKYL, and many of their cotemporaries, whose speeches and whose writings may be opposed, without the leaſt dread of inferiority, to any of those so highly extolled by the Roman panegyriſt. Let us select two of them, SOMERS and BOLINGBROKE, men of opposite parties, opposite principles, opposite character—but, alike admired for their genius and their talents.

With regard to the first of these, we cannot do greater juſtice to his memory than by repeating one of Mr. WAL-

POLE's

POLE's remarks, that "all the traditional accounts of Lord SOMERS, the historians of the last age and its best authors, represent him as the moſt incorrupt lawyer and the honestest statesman; as a maſter-orator, a genius of the finest taste, and as a patriot of the noblest and most extensive views; as a man who dispensed blessings by his life, and planned them for posterity." His eloquence was often exerted in stemming the tide of faction, and in promoting the real interests of his country, but was never displayed with greater vigour and dignity than in repelling the malignant attacks of his political enemies. In the year 1701, when the Tories, at that time the superior party in the House of Commons, seemed determined upon aiming an irrecoverable blow at the heads of their antagonists, and selected Lord SOMERS and three more of his noble colleagues, as the objects of their fury, he desired to be heard in his own defence, during the debates which preceded the ultimate resolution on this subject. The request could not be denied; and his Lordship, having been admitted within the bar, entered into so masterly a defence of his conduct, that, had the question been immediately put, it was believed he would have been acquitted by a great majority. But the ardor of honest conviction being suffered to cool, other considerations finally prevailed, and the vote of impeachment was carried by a division of 198 against 188. An address to the King for the removal of Lords SOMERS, OXFORD, PORTLAND, and HALIFAX, from his Majesty's presence and councils soon followed; but all this was only a temporary triumph. Violent altercations took place between both Houses, which ended in the dismissal of the impeachment by the Lords; and before the end of the year, the Great Seal was restored to Lord SOMERS, whose clearness of head

head and incorruptibility of heart rendered him most deserving of it.

Mr. BELSHAM gives us in a few words a very faithful sketch of the character of Lord BOLINGBROKE, whom he represents as possessed of abilities of the first order,—of manners the most captivating, and of eloquence the most commanding; by which he acquired and maintained a surprising ascendancy over the opinions of all his political associates *. But his portrait at full length by the Earl of CHESTERFIELD is much better adapted to our purpose, because it was drawn with a view of animating a favorite son to the study of the highest and most shining species of oratory. "I have sent you," says this great master of the art which he recommends, "Lord Bolingbroke's book †, which he published about a year ago. I desire that you will read it over and over again, with particular attention to the style, and to all those beauties of oratory with which it is adorned. Till I read that book, I confess I did not know all the extent and powers of the English language. Lord BOLINGBROKE has both a tongue and a pen to persuade: his manner of speaking, in private conversation, is full as elegant as his writings: whatever subject he either speaks or writes upon, he adorns it with the most splendid eloquence—not a studied or labored eloquence, but such a flowing happiness of diction, which (from the care perhaps at first) is become so habitual to him, that even his most familiar conversations, if taken down in writing, would bear the press without the least correction either as to method or style. If his conduct, in the former part of his life, had been equal to all his natural and acquired talents, he would most justly have merited the epithet of all-accomplished. He is himself

* Introduction to Vol. II. History of England.

† Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism, first published in 1748.

sensible

sensible of his past errors: those violent passions, which seduced him in his youth, have now subsided by age; and, take him as he is now, the character of all-accomplished is more his due than any man's I ever knew in my life.

"But he has been a most mortifying instance of the violence of human passions, and of the weakness of the most exalted human reason. His virtues and his vices, his reason and his passions, did not blend themselves by a gradation of tints, but formed a shining and sudden contrast—here the darkest, there the most splendid colors; and both rendered more shining from their proximity. Impetuosity, excess, and almost extravagancy, characterized not only his passions, but even his senses. His youth was distinguished by all the tumult and storm of pleasures, in which he most licentiously triumphed, disdaining all decorum. His fine imagination has often been heated and exhausted with his body, in celebrating and deifying the prostitute of the night; and his convivial joys were pushed to all the extravagancy of the frantic Bacchanals. Those passions were interrupted but by a stronger,—Ambition. The former impaired both his constitution and his character; but the latter destroyed both his character and his reputation.

"He has noble and generous sentiments, rather than fixed reflected principles of good nature and friendship; but they are more violent than lasting, and suddenly and often varied to their opposite extremes, with regard even to the same persons. He receives the common attentions of civility as obligations, which he returns with interest; and resents with passion the little inadvertencies of human nature, which he repays with interest too. Even a difference of opinion upon a philosophical subject, would provoke and prove him no practical philosopher, at least.

"Notwith-

"Notwithstanding the dissipation of his youth, and the tumultuous agitation of his middle age, he has an infinite fund of various and almost universal knowledge, which from the clearest and quickest conception, and happiest memory, that ever man was blessed with, he always carries about him. It is his pocket-money; and he never has occasion to draw upon a book for any sum. He excels more particularly in history, as his historical works plainly prove. The relative political and commercial interests of every country, particularly of his own, are better known to him than perhaps to any man in it; but how steadily he has pursued the latter in his public conduct, his enemies of all parties and denominations tell with joy.

"He engaged young, and distinguished himself in business; and his penetration was almost intuition. I am old enough to have heard him speak in parliament; and I remember, that, though prejudiced against him by party, I felt all the force and charms of his eloquence. Like BELIAL, in MILTON, "he made the worse appear the better cause." All the internal and external advantages and talents of an orator are undoubtedly his. Figure, voice, elocution, knowledge, and, above all, the purest and most florid diction, with the justest metaphors and happiest images, had raised him to the post of secretary at war, at four and twenty years old,—an age, at which others are hardly thought fit for the smallest employments.

"During his long exile in France, he applied himself to study with his characteristical ardor; and there he formed, and chiefly executed the plan of a great philosophical work. The common bounds of human knowledge are too narrow for his warm and aspiring imagination. He must go *extra flammantia mœnia mundi*, and explore the unknown and unknowable regions of metaphysics, which

open

open an unbounded field for the excursions of an ardent imagination; where endless conjectures supply the defect of unattainable knowledge, and too often usurp both its name and influence."

A juſt censure of Lord BOLINGBROKE's philoſophical works could not be expressed with greater delicacy; but it is the style of his political writings which merits the attention of the young orator. He will find them as animated as the noble Lord's speeches in parliament; for we may say of him with greater truth, perhaps, than of any other celebrated orator, either ancient or modern, that he had the moſt maſterly command both of the pen and the tongue; and that, when he took up the former, it seemed endued with all the powers of an electrical conductor, and transfused the fire of his genius into every sentence with undiminished force and ardor.

The other cotemporary orators above-named were little inferior to SOMERS or to BOLINGBROKE; and it is farther remarkable, that many of our most admired writers in every department of useful and polite learning flourished nearly at the same period. The art of thinking, of judging, of reasoning was reduced to a few plain principles by LOCKE, whose Essay on the Human Understanding ought to supersede for ever all the former subtilties and barbarous jargon of the Schools. NEWTON, about the same time, excited still greater astonishment by his discoveries in Natural Philosophy, and by explaining the "sublimely simple" laws of the Universe with the utmost clearness and precision. SWIFT, ADDISON, POPE, and their friends, formed, as it were, a constellation of wit and genius, the lustre of which will never fade. By the emanation of this pure light, we instantly distinguish real beauties from meretricious ornaments; and we are

not

not liable to be dazzled by the gaudy plumage of the peacocks of Parnassus, nor to be led astray from the paths of Nature by the meteors of pedantry, affectation, perverted talents, or false taste.

Almost all the celebrated writers in the reign of Queen ANNE continued their equally brilliant and useful exertions during the government of her successor. Some of the former orators also remained; and the names of a WYNDHAM, a WALPOLE, a TOWNSHEND, a SHIPPEN, a RAYMOND, an ATTERBURY, and a BATHURST may be added to the illustrious list.

In the reign of GEORGE II. the oratorical catalogue was considerably enlarged; and we know not, which most to admire, the extraordinary height to which Eloquence was then carried, or the numberless variety of forms in which it appeared. But it would require the glowing pencil of a CICERO to do justice to the energy and vehemence of an ARGYLE;—to the extensive knowledge and vigorous genius of a CARTARET;—to the commanding simplicity of a SCARBOROUGH, whose voice was said to have been borrowed by Truth and Virtue, which never want, and seldom wear ornaments;—to CHESTERFIELD's elegance both of style and delivery, to his uncommon union of perspicuity with conciseness, of genteel humor with sound reasoning, of purity, precision, and a happy choice of words with the utmost ease and fluency;—to the irresistible force and poignancy of a PULTENEY, whose tongue was more dreaded by the minifter than any other man's sword;—to the plausible reasoning; the calm, fweet-toned, insinuating persuasiveness of a MURRAY;—and to the transcendent powers of a PITT, who, though more indebted to Nature than any other orator that ever existed, was not under less obligation to good

good fortune in having appeared on the great theatre of the world at a time when there was a GRATTAN to draw the following portrait of him.

The historical painter fixes upon the moment when Mr. PITT's advice to disconcert the perfidious designs of France and Spain by a well-timed blow being over-ruled in the cabinet, he resigned the seals rather than remain in a situation that made him responsible for measures which he was no longer allowed to guide. "The Secretary," says Mr. GRATTAN, "ſtood alone. Modern degeneracy had not reached him. Original and unaccommodating, the features of his character had the hardihood of antiquity. His august mind overawed majesty; and one of his sovereigns thought royalty so impaired in his presence, that he conspired to remove him, in order to be relieved from his superiority. No state-chicanery, no narrow system of vicious politics, no idle contest for miniſterial victories sunk him to the vulgar level of the great; but overbearing, persuasive, and impracticable, his object was England,—his ambition was fame. Without dividing, he deſtroyed party; without corrupting, he made a venal age unanimous. France sunk beneath him. With one hand he smote the House of Bourbon, and wielded in the other the democracy of England. The sight of his mind was infinite; and his schemes were to affect not England, not the preſent age only, but Europe and posterity. Wonderful were the means by which theſe ſchemes were accomplished, always seasonable, always adequate, the suggestions of an underſtanding animated by ardor, and enlightened by prophecy.

"The ordinary feelings, which render life amiable and indolent, were unknown to him. No domestic difficulties, no domestic weakneſs reached him; but, aloof from the sordid occurrences of life, and unsullied by its inter-

course, he came occasionally into our system, to counsel, and to decide.

" A character ſo exalted, so ſtrenuous, so various, so authoritative astonished a corrupt age; and the Treasury trembled at the name of PITT through all her classes of venality. Corruption imagined, indeed, that she had found defects in this statesman, and talked much of the inconsistency of his glory, and much of the ruin of his victories; but the history of his country, and the calamities of the enemy refuted her.

" Nor were his political abilities his only talents: his eloquence was an æra in the senate, peculiar and spontaneous, familiarly expressing gigantic sentiments and instinctive wisdom; not like the torrent of DEMOSTHENES, or the splendid conflagration of TULLY, it resembled sometimes the thunder, and sometimes the music of the ſpheres. He did not, like MURRAY, conduct the understanding through the painful subtilty of argumentation; nor was he, like TOWNSHEND, for ever on the rack of exertion; but rather lightened upon the subject, and reached the point by the flashings of the mind, which, like those of his eye, were felt, but could not be followed.

" Upon the whole, there was in this man something that could create, subvert, or reform;—an understanding, a spirit, and an eloquence to summon mankind to society, or to break the bonds of slavery asunder, and to rule the wilderness of free minds with unbounded authority;—something that could establish or overwhelm empires, and strike a blow in the world that should resound through the universe."

Among the orators and statesmen of the last reign, and particularly in connection with the names of MURRAY and PITT, we cannot overlook that of HENRY FOX, who, like the two former, was raised to the honors of the peerage

by the sovereign now on the throne. His talents have been very faithfully described as less brilliant than solid: few of his cotemporaries equalled him in vigour of underſtanding or in extent of knowledge; and when he ſpoke in public, he always commanded attention, not by the splendor of his eloquence, but the superior weight and force of his observations *.

The firſt Earl of CHATHAM and the firſt Lord HOLLAND have the farther honor of having left behind them in their reſpective families two sons, WILLIAM PITT, and CHARLES FOX, who, with EDMUND BURKE, may be said to have formed the oratorical Triumvirate of the present reign. These also are dead; but their speeches will be preserved as long as our language; and if we had no other specimens of Britiſh eloquence, would alone be sufficient to place it on a level with the most admired productions of antiquity.

After the decease of those three great orators, I see many still in our Senate, who rise far above mediocrity, yet very few, indeed, who come up to, or even approach the same degree of excellence. To these few I cannot help addressing CICERO's beautiful exhortation to BRUTUS, after the death of HORTENSIUS. I hope they will feel some part of its force and pertinency even in my humble attempt to preserve its spirit, though the change of circumstances and character has rendered some alterations necessary. In this hope only, I presume to say to them—"As you now seem to have been left the sole guardians of an orphan eloquence, let me conjure you to cherish her with a generous fidelity: discourage the addreſſes of her worthless and impertinent suitors: preserve her pure and unblemished in all her virgin charms; and secure

* See BELSHAM's History of Great Britain, vol. ii. book v.

 her,

her, to the utmost of your ability, from the lawless violence of every ruffian."

I still feel some confidence that genuine oratory will not be suffered to languish amongst us. We have many advantages almost peculiar to our country, arising out of the very form of our constitution and government: we have also before us some of the brightest models in every species of composition, as well as some of the best preservatives from those corruptions of literature which marked the fall of other nations: but we unhappily retain in our systems of public and private education too much of the old spirit of dry maxims, abſtracted rules, unentertaining precepts, and such other perplexing details as are much more likely to impede than to assist the efforts of youth, and in many instances to give them a disgust to solid learning, which may continue in their maturer years. Instead of adhering to so absurd a plan, which ought long since to have been exploded;—instead of Treatises of Grammar, of Rhetoric, of Logic, let us put into the hands of boys, as soon as they have learned to read, the most simple and elegant illuſtrations of all three in the works of the authors above recommended. By adopting this method, the powers of the mind would be gradually unfolded; the fancy impreſſed with beautiful images; the memory agreeably exercised; the easy and natural exertions of genius charmed forth by curiosity and emulation; and, what ought to be considered as of the utmoſt importance, such a habit of cheerfulness imperceptibly formed in the growing man as muſt make him happy in himself, and engage him to contribute to the happiness of others.

But though I cannot help conſidering the style and the intricacies of moſt of the elementary books, still in general use, as a very improper introduction to the study of poetry

poetry and eloquence, yet it would be running into the opposite extreme to reject the aid of all rules, or to deem familiar explanations of the grand principles of composition unnecessary and injurious. What I contend for is, that an attentive perusal of good examples should always go before precepts, and that boys should be made feel the beauties of language, before we attempted to give them clear ideas of the principles on which those beauties depended, or of the combined efforts of nature and art which produced them. Such a procedure will render the study of Grammar, of Rhetoric, and even of Logic as easy and pleasant as it is now tiresome and forbidding. I shall here beg leave to introduce a few remarks on what appears to me essential in each of them, and on the best method of making them subservient to the formation of the accomplished orator.

# CHAP. I.

## OF GRAMMAR.

IT requires no small degree of courage to oppose the established practice of Grammar-schools, those venerable seminaries of learning, to which the nation is indebted for many of its greatest ornaments. It may also be deemed ungrateful in me to find fault with the course of instruction, upon which my own little pretensions to learning are founded. But one muſt be partial to a culpable extreme, not to see and confess, that there are some practices continued in those schools, unavoidable perhaps in their original inſtitution, but which the revolutions that have since taken place in literature render it highly necessary to reform. What I shall at present beg leave to specify is the cuſtom of making boys enter upon Latin Grammar at the very opening of their scholastic career, a custom which (not to mention the great disadvantages that must arise from an early neglect of the mother-tongue, and from committing to memory at the most susceptible period of life words without ideas, and jargon without meaning) has been found inimical to the prevalence of all taſte for any farther literary pursuits, which are thus rendered at the entrance peculiarly difficult and disgusting. The principles of language, it may be said, in whatever manner they are taught, cannot but appear somewhat dry and unentertaining to the young student: but even admitting this to be true, it must be allowed that his pro-

gress

gress will be rendered infinitely pleasanter, and his improvement much more accelerated, by having those principles unfolded and exemplified in his native tongue, than in a language with which he is unacquainted.

The late Bishop of London [Dr. LOWTH] has placed this matter in so striking a point of view, and supported the propriety of grounding boys in English Grammar, previously to any farther advances, by arguments which carry with them such irresistible conviction, that I cannot avoid transcribing a few of his remarks on a subject of so much importance.

"A good foundation in the general principles of Grammar is, in the first place, necessary for all those who are initiated in a learned education; and for all others likewise, who shall have occasion to furnish themselves with the knowledge of modern languages. Universal Grammar cannot be taught abstractedly: it must be done with reference to some language already known, in which the terms are to be explained, and the rules exemplified. The learner is supposed to be unacquainted with all but his native tongue; and in what other, consistently with reason and common sense, can you go about to explain it to him? When he has a competent knowledge of the main principles of Grammar in general, exemplified in his own language, he then will apply himself with great advantage to the study of any other. To enter at once upon the science of Grammar, and the study of a foreign language, is to encounter two difficulties together, each of which would be much lessened by being taken separately, and in its proper order. For these plain reasons, a competent grammatical knowledge of our own language is the true foundation upon which all literature, properly so called, ought to be raised. If this method were adopted in our schools; if children were first taught the common

 principles

principles of Grammar, by some ſhort and clear ſyſtem of Engliſh Grammar, which, happily by its simplicity and facility, is perhaps fitter than any other for such a purpose, they would have some notion of what they were going about when they should enter into the Latin Grammar, and would hardly be engaged so many years as they now are, in that most irksome and difficult part of literature, with so much labor of the memory, and with so little assistance of the understanding."

It should also be considered, that many boys destined for a commercial or a military life are sent to grammar-schools for a few years only, during which short period, if they are not instructed in English, they seldom can cultivate it afterwards with success, and of course must remain shamefully incapable of expressing themselves with propriety in their mother tongue. This is a defect, for which no other accomplishment can make amends: yet, very little attention is paid to it, and we are every day struck with the force and justness of that remark of CICERO's, which Dr. Lowth chose for a motto to his English Grammar, viz. That a purity of style is certainly commendable, though not so much for its intrinsic consequence, as because it is too generally neglected: in short, it is not so meritorious to speak our native tongue correctly, as it is disgraceful to speak it otherwise; nor is it so much the proper qualification of a good orator, as of every well-bred member of the community.

A few years ago, I had some conversation on this subject with a friend of mine, who was then preparing for the press a treatise of practical education, and who politely expressed some satisfaction at my manner of accounting for the general neglect of English Grammar. This appeared to me to arise in a great measure from the simple structure of our language, the natural order in which our words

words follow one another, and the few changes they admit of in their last syllables, which induced many persons to suppose, that the utmoſt degree of correctness in speaking and writing it might be acquired by an intercourse with the polite world, and an attentive peruſal of good books, without the trouble of Grammar rules, which they thought only gave an appearance of difficulty to an attainment in itself easy and pleasurable. To the prevalence of this notion, and the consequent defect of early culture, we must attribute the many blunders which disgrace the style of most persons with whom we converse, and have a still worse effect in many literary productions, otherwise not destitute of merit. We find the force of solid reasoning often weakened by slovenly expressions, and the beauty of a fine thought obscured by some wretched ſolecism. It should be remembered that the easy construction of a language, instead of justifying the neglect of its Grammar, serves only to render the smallest offences againſt it more glaring and unpardonable. Any fault is less entitled to indulgence in proportion to the little care with which it might have been avoided.

I took occasion, at the same time, to suggest to my friend another very prevalent mistake, that the study of Latin Grammar would supersede the neceſſity of any particular attention to English Grammar. The general principles of all languages are indeed the ſame, and the ſtudy of any one Grammar will therefore facilitate that of another; but every language has its peculiar forms of conſtruction, its idioms, its niceties, which can only be known by diſtinct application; and as a proof of this, we often meet with good classical scholars, who, from their disregard of English Grammar, are frequently deficient in purity, precision, and correctness. Surely the firſt, as well as the greatest care ought to be bestowed upon an atainment

ment which we have hourly occasion for, and the want of which is so easily discovered. Other languages, particularly those of ancient Greece and Rome, have undoubted claims to our regard. They should be treated with the politeness and respect due to well-bred foreigners, sojourning in our country; but our own language must be cherished as a bosom friend, whose agreeable intercourse, whose constant and faithful services we ought to repay with the strongest proofs of our cordial affection and partiality.

As to the best method of teaching English Grammar, it will be enough to make boys commit to memory the definitions and principal rules in LOWTH's Introduction, a work so justly admired for its clearness, simplicity, precision, and elegance. But the whole must be read with great care; and though I am not an advocate for diffuse interpretations, yet MURRAY's paraphrase of LOWTH may lessen a part of the Tutor's labor. The next object is to exercise the pupils frequently in *parsing*, that is, shewing the construction, agreement, and dependence of the several words that compose any sentence assumed at pleasure. After this, you are to put to the proof their discernment of the smallest inaccuracies, by accustoming them to correct every day pieces of bad English drawn up for the purpose; and MURRAY's Exercises, which are well adapted to his Grammar, will save you a great deal of trouble in this respect. Lastly, every scholar should be obliged to produce twice a week some little composition of his own, in the form of a letter, a short story, a fable, or a theme, according to his age and state of improvement.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

### OF RHETORIC.

WE are now advancing one step higher in the ſcale of liberal improvement; and I am convinced that it will be taken by the pupil with ease and pleasure, if his grammatical studies have been conducted in the manner which I have ventured to point out. He will pass with eagerness from the art of employing words correctly to that of employing them persuasively; and the facility of the transition will afford the beſt proof of the excellence or alluring judiciousness of the preparatory plan. "The liberal Arts and Sciences," says Sir RICHARD STEELE, "are all beautiful as the Graces; nor has Grammar, the severe Mother of all, so frightful a face of her own: it is the vizard put upon it that scares children. She is made to speak hard words, which to them sound like conjuring. Let her talk intelligibly and they will liſten to her." This remark may be applied with still greater force and juſtness to Rhetoric, of all arts and sciences the most susceptible of flowers and of engaging attractions, yet often rendered more repulsive than any of them by the harshness of technical language, and the intricacy of rules which are far beyond the comprehension of the youthful mind, and which, instead of smoothing the road to Eloquence, encumber it with much useless and offensive rubbish.

Having long observed the bad effects of the books of Rhetoric which are commonly taught in schools, it some-

times

times occurred to me, that the art of speaking well and pursuasively would be greatly facilitated, if those books were to be burned, and such of CHESTERFIELD's Letters as relate to this subject introduced in their stead. The following letter alone appears to me to contain more useful information, and a stronger incentive to the study of Eloquence, than all the long strings of tropes and figures, the divisions and subdivisions, the jargon and absurdities, with which the minds of ingenuous youth have been pestered from the days of ARISTOTLE to the present time.

In a former letter, Lord CHESTERFIELD had told his son, that he believed him to be the first boy, to whom, under the age of eight years, one had ever ventured to mention the subject of Rhetoric. "But," continues he, "I am of opinion that we cannot begin to think too young; and that the art which teaches us how to persuade the mind, and touch the heart, must surely deserve the earliest attention." After some remarks in the same letter on purity of language, grammatical correctness, and the careful perusal of good authors, he passes in a few subsequent letters to other subjects, and then resumes his favorite topic thus:

"DEAR BOY,

"Let us return to Oratory, or the art of speaking well, which should never be entirely out of your thoughts, since it is so useful in every part of life, and so absolutely necessary in most. A man can make no figure without it in Parliament, in the Church, or in the Law; and even in common conversation, a man that has acquired an easy and habitual eloquence, who speaks properly and accurately, will have a great advantage over those who speak incorrectly and inelegantly.

"The

"The business of Oratory, as I have told you before, is to persuade people; and you easily feel, that to please people is a great step towards persuading them. You must then, consequently, be sensible how advantageous it is for a man who speaks in public, whether it be in Parliament, in the Pulpit, or at the Bar (that is, in the Courts of Law) to please his hearers so much as to gain their attention; which he can never do without the help of Oratory. It is not enough to speak the language, he speaks in, in its utmost purity, and according to the rules of Grammar; but he muſt speak it elegantly, that is, he muſt choose the best and most expressive words, and put them in the beſt order. He should likewise adorn what he says by proper metaphors, similes, and other figures of Rhetoric *; and he should enliven it, if he can, by quick and sprightly turns of wit. For example: suppose you had a mind to persuade Mr. MATTAIRE† to give you a holyday, would you bluntly say to him, Give me a holyday? That would certainly not be the way to persuade him to it. But you should endeavour firſt to please him, and gain his attention, by telling him, that your experience of his goodness and indulgence encouraged you to ask a favor of him; that, if he should not think proper to grant it, at least you hoped he would not take it ill that you asked it. Then you should tell him what it was that you wanted; that it was a holyday; for which you should give your reasons, as that you had such or such a thing to do, or such a place to go to. Then you might urge some arguments why he should not refuse you; as that you have seldom asked that favor, and that you seldom will; and that the mind may sometimes require a little rest from labor, as well as the body. This you may il-

* His Lordship had explained the nature of those figures of Rhetoric in a former letter, which the Editor of the Collection could not find.

† The child's Tutor.

lustrate

lustrate by a simile; and say, that, as the bow is the stronger for being sometimes unstrung and unbent, so the mind will be capable of more attention, for being now and then easy and relaxed.

"This is a little Oration, fit for such a little Orator as you; but, however, it will make you understand what is meant by Oratory and Eloquence; which is, to persuade. I hope you will have that talent hereafter in great matters."

It requires but little experience in the practice of teaching to be convinced that such a mode of communicating instruction must always prove the most effectual and impressive. Nothing gives so much vigour to application in any pursuit, as a lively sense of the pleasure or advantage to be derived from it. Boys are idle and inattentive at school, only because the benefit expected from what they are ordered to learn is often too remote, and of a nature which they cannot comprehend. Let them but once feel its immediate utility, or rather subserviency to their gratification, and from that moment they are restless till they become masters of it. Shew them the irresistible powers of persuasive language and of a graceful address, in obtaining any favor from their teachers or their friends; and you will find them ready to crowd about you when giving lessons on oratory, provided your precepts are few, very simple, very concise, and well illustrated, as in the above instance, by examples suited to their capacity, taste, and character.

As changes in any established system will have less prejudices to combat, if we can bring them about by degrees, I would retain a few of the most familiar terms of art, as well as the general heads to which precepts in Rhetoric have been usually referred; but would carefully retrench the endless subdivisions, and, above all, the vocabulary of hard names given not only to the real ornaments

ments of speech, but to many of its greatest defects, to puns, to witticisms, to silly conceits, to the jingle of sounds, and the prettiness of affectation, all which derive a sanction from the imposing title of tropes and figures.

In the first place, it is proper to explain to your pupil what art you are going to teach him, the art of speaking well, that is to say, the art of speaking in such a manner as to make others listen to us, and to persuade those who do listen. For this purpose, the Orator must examine his subject in various points of view, and find out such topics as may be most proper to enlarge upon: he is next to dispose or arrange his arguments and remarks in those parts of his discourse where they are most likely to have the best effect: and, lastly, he must clothe the whole in suitable language, heightened by a just, graceful, and impressive mode of delivery. CICERO's summary of the duties of a public speaker is equally admirable for its force and conciseness: he should well consider *what he is to say*, in *what order, and how*—" Quid dicat, et quo loco, et quo modo." The union of these requisites is indispensible; for, as the same writer observes, it is of little consequence to discover what is proper to be said, unless you are able to express it in an easy and agreeable manner; and even that will be insufficient, if not recommended by the voice, the look, and the gesture *. Hence Invention, Disposition, Elocution, and Pronunciation are considered by Rhetoricians as the four essential functions of an Orator, and, of course, as the four grand objects, to which all the rules of art must be directed †. Let us see what they prescribe respecting each of them.

* CICERO de claris Orat.

† Some add a fifth function, namely Memory, which is merely a faculty of the mind, and therefore not to be classed with the former any more than Judgment, Fancy, Genius, or any other mental Power.

SECT.

## SECT. I.

### OF INVENTION.

By oratorical Invention is meant the discovery of what may be most serviceable to the cause in hand, or moſt conducive to the end aimed at, which is persuasion. For this purpose, we muſt find out such arguments as are moſt likely to convince the understanding, and such affecting touches as may find their way to the heart. The latter are often of greater consequence than the former; for it will not always be enough to place the truth in the cleareſt light, unless we can alſo render it intereſting and attractive. Prejudice and obstinacy will often resist the demonstrations of fair reasoning. We must therefore call in the passions, to the aid of reason, and not content with making men cool approvers of our advice, endeavour to set their souls on fire to carry it into execution.

" Que dans tous vos discours la passion émue
" Aille chercher le cœur, l'échauffe, et le remue.
" Si d'un beau mouvement l'agréable fureur
" Souvent ne nous remplit d'une aimable terreur,
" Ou n'excite en notre ame une pitié charmante,
" En vain vous étalez une scene éclatante.
" Vos froids raisonnemens ne feront qu'attiédir
" Un spectateur toujours paresseux d'applaudir;
" Et qui des vains efforts de votre rhétorique
" Justement fatigué s'endort, ou vous critique.
" Le secret est d'abord de plaire et de toucher;
" Inventez des ressorts qui puissent m'attacher.

Boileau.

All the old books of Rhetoric are nearly filled with rules respecting those grand instruments of persuasion, Arguments, and the Passions; but though youthful genius may

may derive some little aid from their remarks concerning the former, a knowledge and masterly command of the latter are not to be acquired by metaphysical ſubtilties, but by a diligent study of the beſt dramatic compositions, under the guidance of a good maſter.

As to the invention of Arguments, the Rhetoricians fancied they had reduced that to a sort of practical system. They disposed in due order the leading points of view, in which any ſubject might be examined either internally, or externally, and led genius as it were by the hand, to find out with ease all sorts of arguments in the different *places* to which it was thus conducted. By the word *places*, therefore, or *common places*, we are to understand certain general repertories, or magazines, containing all the riches which are the objects of invention. The young orator will find it worth his while to take a glance at the most important of them.

The firſt is *Definition*; by which the speaker finds in the very nature of his ſubject a strong argument in support of his opinions. Thus Mr. Fox, in order to recommend his famous East India bill, gives a clear and forcible definition of the liberty which it tended to eſtablish, and of the despotism which it meant to destroy. "Freedom," says he, "consists in the safe and sacred possesion of a man's property, governed by laws defined and certain; with many perſonal privileges, natural, civil, and religious, which he cannot surrender without ruin to himself, and of which to be deprived by any other power is despotism. This bill, instead of subverting, is destined to stabilitate those principles;—instead of narrowing the basis of freedom, it tends to enlarge it;—inſtead of suppressing, its object is to infuse and circulate the spirit of liberty. What is the most odious species of tyranny? Precisely that which this bill is meant to annihilate.—



That

That a handful of men, free themselves, should exercise the most base and abominable despotism over millions of their fellow-creatures; that innocence should be the victim of oppression; that industry should toil for rapine; that the harmless labourer should ſweat, not for his own benefit, but for the luxury and rapacity of tyrannic depredation; in a word, that thirty millions of men, gifted by Providence with the ordinary endowments of humanity, should groan under a system of despotism, unmatched in all the histories of the world."

Here you may point out to your pupil the difference between an oratorical and a logical definition. If you ask a Logician, what is History, he will tell you that it is a narrative of facts and events. But how will the Orator define it? History, he will say, is the picture of past ages, held out for the instruction of those which are to come: it is an exact representation of the rise and fall of empires, and of the cause of their progress or decline: it is the impartial record of the actions and passions, the virtues and vices, the glory and infamy of mankind: it is, in short, the great repository of the wisdom and experience of the whole human race, where every lesson is rendered almost irresistibly impressive by the force of example.

*Etymology*, or the derivation of a word from its original, may be made the ground of some little argument; but it has so much the air of pedantry, and betrays such an ostentation of learning, that it should seldom be resorted to. "The word Physician," says an able advocate for presenting medical instructions in a plain, clear, and intelligible form—"The word Physician strictly means the admirer, the student, the pupil of Nature. Let us then copy her beautiful simplicity: let us lay aside all mystery and artifice: let us withdraw the veil under which

 pride

pride and self-interest have too long concealed the most important truths: let us shew mankind," &c.

Things are often best defined by their *Contraries*, as well as happily illustrated by *Similitudes*, or *Comparisons*: In what does true dignity of manners consist? Not, as CHESTERFIELD very justly observes, in pride or arrogance, the pretensions of which are commonly treated with sneer and contempt; nor in abject flattery and indiscriminate assentation, which are always degrading. But a modest assertion of one's own opinion, and a complaisant acquiescence in other people's, preserve dignity.

As to similes, we see with what effect one of them is made use of by WARBURTON, to shew how soon the lessons, which the Jews had learned in bondage, were forgotten in prosperity. "All those exalted ideas of piety and virtue," says he, "raised like a beautiful kind of frost-work in the cold season of adversity, dissolved and disappeared at the warm aspect of good fortune."

Some orators are indebted for no small share of their fame to a judicious and animated *Enumeration of the parts*, as they are termed, of a subject. Thus, instead of shewing that we should love virtue, it is proved in detail to be our duty to love and cherish prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance. The French are very fond of this *common place*; and one of their critics compares such details, not indeed to a thunderbolt, of which they have neither the force nor the luftre, but to hail, which does not beat down the traveller, but compels him to give way and to seek for shelter.

Nearly related to this is another *common place*, well known by the name of the *Genus* and the *Species*. Thus it is easily demonstrated that we should love justice, because we should love virtue; and reciprocally, that it is

our duty to love virtue, because we ought to love justice, which is one of its species.

*Circumstances* have also great weight, when happily chosen in a narrative, or forcibly urged as presumptive evidence in trials at the bar.

> " This art to Poets not confin'd alone
> I grant, 'tis to the skilfnl Pleader known,
> When he the daring villain strikes with awe,
> And curbs his fury by the reins of law,
> Or from death's jaws snatches the destin'd prey,
> And injur'd innocence restores to day." VIDA.

An *Accumulation* of thoughts, of facts, of circumſtances, heaped one upon the other to overwhelm the hearer by their number, is often introduced with great effect, if the art be concealed, by their appearing to start out of the subject, and to rush unsought for on the speaker's mind. Thus when CICERO enumerates the great qualities of POMPEY:

" What language can equal the valour of POMPEY? What can be said either worthy of him, new to you, or which every one has not heard? For those are not the only virtues of a general which are commonly thought so. It is not courage alone which forms a great leader, but induſtry in business, intrepidity in dangers, vigour in acting, prudence in concerting, promptness in executing. All which characters appear with greater lustre in him than in all the other generals we ever saw or heard of." *Pro Leg. Man.*

Mr. ADDISON has a beautiful *Accumulation* of circumstances rising one above another, when he is describing the treatment of Negroes in the Weſt Indies, who ſometimes upon the death of their Masters, or upon changing their service, hang themselves upon the next tree.

" Who

"Who can forbear," says Mr. ADDISON, "admiring their fidelity, though it expresses itſelf in so dreadful a manner? What might not that savage greatness of soul, which appears in these poor wretches on many occasions, be raised to, were it rightly cultivated? And what colour of excuse can there be for the contempt with which we treat this part of our species? That we should not put them on the common foot of humanity; that we should only set an insignificant fine upon the man who murders them; nay, that we should, as much as in us lies, cut them off from the prospects of happiness in another world as well as in this, and deny them that which we look upon as the proper means of attaining it."

The *Motive* or *Cause* and its *Effects*, the circumſtances that precede or follow any event with which they are connected, and are called in terms of art the *Antecedents* and the *Consequents*, are other *common places* occasionally useful to the orator.

Thus CICERO, *ab Antecedentibus*, namely the designs of CLODIUS, his manner of departure from home, and the rencounter, shews that MILO did not lie in wait for CLODIUS, but CLODIUS for him.

"What method," says the Orator, "can we take to prove that CLODIUS lay in wait for MILO? It is sufficient, considering what an audacious abandoned wretch he was, to shew that he lay under a strong temptation to it, that he formed great hopes, and proposed to himself great advantages from MILO's death. Let that question of CASSIUS therefore, *Whose interest was it?* be applied to the present case. For though no consideration can prevail upon a good man to be guilty of a base action, yet to a bad man the least prospect of advantage will often be sufficient. By MILO's death, CLODIUS not only gained his point of being Prætor, without that restraint which his

his adversary's power as consul would have laid upon his wicked designs, but likewise that of being Prætor under those consuls, by whose connivances at least, if not assistance, he hoped he should be able to betray the state into the mad schemes he had been forming."

And again, *a concomitantibus*, or *from the very circumstances of the facts*, CICERO proceeds thus, "My Lords, every circumstance concurs to prove that it was for MILO's intereſt that CLODIUS should live; that, on the contrary, MILO's death was a most desirable event for answering the purposes of CLODIUS; that on the one side, there was a most implacable hatred, on the other, not the least; that the one had been continually employing himself in acts of violence, the other only in opposing them; that the life of MILO was threatened, and his death publicly foretold by CLODIUS, whereas nothing of that kind was ever heard from MILO; that the day fixed for MILO's journey was necessary, but that of CLODIUS rather the contrary; that MILO made no alteration in his measures, but that CLODIUS feigned an excuse for altering his; that if MILO had designed to way-lay CLODIUS he would have waited for him near the city till it was dark, but that CLODIUS, even if he had been under no apprehensions from MILO, ought to have been afraid of coming to town so late at night."

All the foregoing *Common Places* are called *internal*, because they arise, as the ancients used to say, out of the very *bowels of the cause*, "ex visceribus rei;" but there are some *common places*, suggested by external considerations, particularly in judicial proceedings, such as the *Law* respecting the point in question; the nature of the *Evidence*; *Presumptions* for or against the fact; *Common Report*; and a few other matters of the like kind, which more properly belong to jurisprudence than to eloquence.

SECT.

## SECT. II.

### OF DISPOSITION, THE SECOND ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF THE ORATOR.

FROM what has been said of *Invention*, it is evident that it must chiefly depend on fertility of genius, though a little aided by an easy reference to those *Common Places*, above explained. But the arrangement of the materials, furnished by invention, is the work of judgment alone, and must therefore derive great assistance from art. It is of little avail to think of a good thing, unless it be introduced in the place where it may have most effect. The orator, in drawing up his arguments and the various resources of his genius, must imitate the conduct of a skilful general in the field, who posts his cavalry, infantry, and light troops, where each of them can act to the greatest advantage. CICERO makes use of this simile to give a clear idea of the elder ANTHONY's consummate skill in the due ordering of whatever could be most serviceable to his cause *.

After the Orator, therefore, has taken a comprehensive view of his subject, and has considered every point which may favor his purpose, or be urged against him, he must endeavour, in the opening of his speech, which is called the *Exordium*, to secure the attention of his hearers, by impressing upon their minds a just sense of the importance of the subject, and begetting a favorable opinion of his equality to the discussion of it. But this must be done in a modest and insinuating manner, without the least shew of self-confidence, or any pretension to supe-

* De claris Oratoribus.

rior merit. A long preface also would be an unpardonable abuse of the time and patience of others, who are never better disposed to listen, than when they are relieved from the fear of a long harangue by the brevity of the introduction, and by a seemingly artless statement of the point or points upon which the orator means to enlarge. This statement is called the *Proposition*, and is always immediately accompanied by a *Division* of the subject into different branches when necessary; that is to say, when what is too complicated to be embraced at one view, is presented in various lights with more clearness, precision, and force.

Next to the *Exordium*, the *Proposition*, and the *Division*, the Orator enters upon what is called the *Narration*, or detail of facts, upon which all his arguments are to be founded. In debate, or when he is to reply to others, he often finds it expedient to proceed to a Refutation of what has been impressively urged by his adversary, before he attempts to tell his own story or to draw any inferences from it. He must be as concise in his narrative as is consistent with perspicuity, never encumbering it with frivolous circumstances, and, at the same time, omitting nothing of material importance. He softens some: he heightens others; and forms a striking and well-connected tissue of the whole.

In the arrangement of his arguments and of his occasional addresses to the feelings and passions of his hearers, he must not lose sight of the simile before quoted from Cicero on the judicious marshalling or drawing up of troops in the field. The general rule is to place in the front of the battle men of the greatest strength and courage, as success so often depends upon the first onset: other troops of tried skill and firmness are to be posted in the rear, to turn, by a well-timed and decisive effort, the

scale of victory, and to secure the glory of the day: soldiers of a doubtful character are stationed in the middle, so that, if they are not animated by the example of the great men before them, they may be driven on by the forcible impulse of those behind.

All this appears plausible enough in theory; but numberless circumstances will often arise to render other tactics necessary. The orator, as well as the military commander, must not trust to any fixed rules, but to his own good sense and presence of mind, for such changes of plan as may be best suited to the exigency of the occasion.

The conclusion of the speech, or what is called the *Peroration*, should be a striking summary of the chief points already enlarged upon, and particularly those of a pathetic nature, often accompanied by a declaration of the speaker's reliance on the candor, discernment, justice, and sensibility of his audience.

For examples of the rules here laid down, we must refer to our selection of the most admired speeches in the English language; but we are also happy to avail ourselves of Lord CHESTERFIELD's equally simple and elegant illustration of the same part of our subject. On finding that his son had chosen DEMOSTHENES for his model, he endeavours to confirm him in that choice, and reminds him of the uncommon pains taken by that orator to conquer many natural impediments, and to acquire a graceful and commanding elocution. "As he took so much pains for the graces of oratory only, I conclude," says his Lordship, "he took still more for the more solid parts of it. I am apt to think he applied himself extremely to the propriety, the purity, and the elegancy of his language,—to the distribution of the parts of his oration,—to the force of his arguments,—to the strength

 of

of his proofs,—and to the passions as well as the judgment of his audience. I fancy he began with an *Exordium*, to gain the good opinion and the affections of his hearers; that afterwards he stated the point in question briefly, but clearly; that he then brought his proofs, afterwards his arguments; and that he concluded with a *Peroration*, in which he recapitulated the whole succinctly, enforced the strong parts, and artfully slipped over the weak ones, and at last made a strong push at the passions of his hearers. Wherever you would persuade or prevail, address yourselves to the passions: it is by them that mankind is to be taken."

## SECT. III.

### OF THE THIRD ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF THE ORATOR.

In the old books of Rhetoric, this is called *Elocution*, and means the language which the Orator makes use of, or the words in which he expresses himself. But Elocution is now commonly taken in a more confined sense, as implying only the tones of voice, the utterance, the enunciation of the speaker, with the proper accompaniments of countenance and gesture, all which were included by the ancients in what they called *Pronunciation*. In order therefore to prevent any confusion which may arise from those different meanings, it is necessary to inform the learner, that our present remarks are confined to the expression of our thoughts and sentiments by words, without any consideration of tones and gestures, which will be the subject of the next section.

There

There is no occasion to repeat here any of the observations before made on grammatical correctness. The efforts of the Student must now be directed to higher attainments, and particularly to the accurate choice of words, which is the foundation of all eloquence. This was the favorite axiom of JULIUS CÆSAR, whom even CICERO placed above all other orators for a pure and elegant command of the Roman language *.

It is impossible, under this head, to lay down a better general rule than the common one, that our thoughts should always appear in a proper dress. This metaphor contains in one word much useful instruction. A good dress should be suited to the perſon, character, and occasion: it should always fit, so as neither to exhibit an awkward appearance by its swagging looseness, nor to prevent the easy and graceful motion of the body and limbs by keeping them in a press: it should be plain, yet neat—genteel, not foppish—occasionally rich, never tawdry—sometimes even splendid and highly adorned, but only when required by the character to be supported, or by the grandeur of the scene, and the dignity of the company. In the same manner our language should be simple, yet well chosen—conveying every idea with clearness and precision—neither encumbered by circumlocutions, on the one hand, nor cramped and obscured by enigmatical brevity, on the other—correct without pedantry, elegant without affectation—copious, not redundant—full, not overflowing—but whether simple or sublime, plain or brilliant, mild or impetuous and energetic, always taking its tone from the nature of the subject, and the effect to be produced.

The old Rhetoricians, who wanted to reduce every thing to fixed rules, thought they found out an admirable

* De claris Oratoribus.

method

method of simplifying a part of their task, by classing orations of all sorts, whatever might be the nature of the subject, or the end aimed at, under three general heads, or kinds, which they called the *demonstrative*, the *deliberative*, and the *judicial*.

The first kind has for its object praise or censure; and includes all panegyrics, invectives, funeral orations, or animated pictures of the excellence or depravity of distinguished characters. On such occasions, the orator is allowed to display all the riches of his genius, all the ornaments, copiousness, and brilliancy of his language: he is preparing to conduct the truly great and good man to the temple of immortal fame, or to consign the villain to eternal infamy: he may therefore give full scope to his talents, being under no restraint but a becoming adherence to facts, without which his praise would only be the effusion of fulsome flattery, and his censure the mere railing of a malignant declaimer.

About a century ago, the French were allowed to have borne away the palm of funeral Oratory, BOSSUET by the sublimity of his panegyrics, and FLECHIER by the delicacy of his compliments, and by the exquisite polish, richness, and harmony of his language. This kind of eloquence has not been so much cultivated in England; but we have perhaps as masterly delineations of character in our histories, those, for instance, written by HUME, ROBERTSON, and BELSHAM, who have adorned their narratives with many an interesting portrait, where we see the vivid colours of genius admirably chastened by the nice touches of historical truth.

In orations of the deliberative kind, the object of discussion is the expediency or inexpediency, the propriety or impropriety, the wisdom or the folly of any measure. The language in such cases must be clear, strong, argu-

mentative

mentative—no finery—no affected graces—nothing introduced to tickle the ear, or amuse the fancy—but to soften prejudices, to command the passions, and carry irresistible conviction to the understanding. The Debates in our own Senate will furnish examples of this kind, in no respect inferior to the most admired productions of ancient Greece or Rome.

Speeches at the Bar are said to be of the judicial kind, and are directed to the purposes of accusation or defence —to prove or disprove a matter of fact—to establish or overturn a question of right—to settle or controvert a point of law. Perspicuity and force, fair reasoning and demonstrative evidence, would seem here to be the only essential requisites.

But however plausible those distinctions may appear, they are so far from being accurate, that all the three different kinds, the demonstrative, the deliberative, and the judicial are blended together in almost every speech, and upon every subject. What are panegyrics and invectives but exhortations to virtue, and dissuasives from vice. Can any argument more powerfully tend to kindle the flame of patriotism in the bosom of a good sovereign than HUME's character of ALFRED, or to excite a stronger detestation of royal vices than the same writer's historical exposure of the cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity, licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty of King JOHN? On the other hand, when we are deliberating on any subject, the necessity, for instance, of a vigorous prosecution of the war against our present enemy, shall we not draw some arguments from his character, from his treachery, his disregard of treaties, his implacable spirit of revenge, his insatiate rapacity and boundless ambition? And will not the demonstrative be thus introduced into the deliberative? Even in those speeches which

which are of the judicial kind, do not the demonſtrative and the deliberative often form very important parts, as when the loveliness of innocence or the deformity of guilt is to be depicted, or when the suspended opinion of the judge and the jury is to be wrought upon by the pleadings of counsel, and inclined in favor of the plaintiff or the defendant?

Thus then we see, that the boasted classification of all possible orations under three heads, and the long details of precepts and of common places annexed to each of them are at best so many ingenious frivolities, more showy than solid, more amusing than instructive. But there is another distinction founded in the nature of things, in the very essence of language, and therefore entitled to the most serious regard—I mean the distinction of three characters in good speaking, or rather of three sorts of style, the maſterly command of which forms the perfect orator. The importance of this part of the subject may be easily conceived from the extraordinary pains with which CICERO has endeavoured to convey clear ideas of it. What an easy and delightful task it is to copy the observations of so great a master! But I must prefix to his remarks on style a short account of the ornaments of language both in single words, and in words as they ſtand connected with each other. These are what Rhetoricians make so much noise about, under the title of *Tropes* and *Figures*.

*Tropes* are changes in the use of words from their primitive and ordinary meaning to another signification which is not strictly proper, yet so nearly allied as to be easily understood, while it affords a new and beautiful idea. The principal tropes are five, and have distinct names assigned to them, *Metaphor*, *Metonymy*, *Synedoche*, *Irony*, and *Hyperbole*. To these are added in books of rhetoric

many

many others, which are merely pedantic subtilties, or abuses rather than ornaments of language.

A Metaphor uses a concealed likeness instead of the proper term; as when we call a courageous man a lion in battle, a thunderbolt of war; or when we say, a harvest of glory, a torrent of eloquence; none of which expressions is taken in its literal sense, but by an aptness of similitude, as CICERO says, conveys and transports the mind from object to object, and hurries it backwards and forwards through a pleasing variety of images—a motion, he adds, which, in its own nature, as being full of life and action, can never fail to be highly delightful *. The images, however, must neither be too bold, nor too mean; and if the metaphors be continued in more words or more sentences, which are then said to form an *Allegory*, strict regard must be paid to perfect consistency in all the images. This is what is called a just preservation of metaphor, without which your attempt at fine language would betray ignorance and false taste, and produce only a jumble of incoherences. Such are the faults, which QUINTILIAN so justly censures in so many writers, who, as he says, begin their metaphor with a tempest, and end in a conflagration †. The beautiful allegory in the eightieth Psalm, where the people of Israel are represented under the image of a vine, has often been quoted as a fine example of metaphorical language. "Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it: thou madest room for it; and when it had taken root, it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it; and the boughs thereof were like the goodly

* Orator ad Brutum.

† Id imprimis est custodiendum, ut quo genere cæperis translationis, hoc finias. Multi autem, cum initium a tempestate sumpserunt, incendio aut ruinâ finiunt, quæ est inconsequentia rerum tædissima.

goodly cedar trees. She stretched out her branches unto the sea, and her boughs unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedge, that all they that go by pluck off her grapes? The wild boar out of the wood doth root it up; and the wild beasts of the field devour it. Turn thee again, thou God of Hosts: look down from heaven: behold and visit this vine; and the place of the vineyard that thy right hand hath planted; and the branch that thou madest so strong for thyself."

In maritime countries, and in England more, perhaps, than in any other, Poets and Orators borrow many of their metaphors, allegories, and similes, from the sea and various naval objects. Thus we speak of the winds, the waves, the boisterous elements of human passion. "There is a tide," says SHAKESPEARE——

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> "Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> "Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> "Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

HORACE's Ode to the Roman Commonwealth under the image of a ship at sea has been justly admired: yet no part of it equals in poetical beauty the following allegory in "The Bard," by GRAY:

> "Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
> "While, proudly rising o'er the azure realm,
> "In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
> "Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
> "Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
> "That hush'd in grim repose, expects his ev'ning prey."

*Metonymy* employs the name of the inventor or author of the invention, or the works of either, as, when we say he devotes all his leisure-hours to the *Muses*, i. e. to the fine arts—he is studying BLACKSTONE, i. e. that excellent writer's

writer's Commentaries on the Laws of England: the cause for the effect, as *Death* is in his hands: the effect for the cause, as *pale* famine: the container for the thing contained, as, he quaffed off the poisoned *bowl;* with many other similar substitutions of one word for another, to which it has some obvious relation.

*Synecdoche* approaches very nearly to the former in several respects: it takes the whole for a part, or a part for the whole; the year for any of the seasons, or any of these for a year; a General for his Army; the Orator for his language or eloquence, &c.

*Irony* is a form of speech, in which the meaning is precisely the reverse of the words. Thus we affect to praise a man for his wisdom, his talents, or his virtues, when we would insinuate his total want of them all. It is the happiest form that can be assumed by genteel mockery, or fine satire, tickling, while it gently probes the wound— ex. What a charming Orator! Surely he is another CICERO! In speaking, the tone of voice, or some gesture commonly furnishes a key to the concealed meaning; but, in writing, some little word is introduced, to shew that we are not in earnest; such as, *no doubt,—every body must be sensible—I should suppose,* or some other sly expression, to prevent the words from being taken literally.

*Hyperbole* is not employed like Irony, in stating the very reverse of the truth, but in magnifying or diminishing it. Thus a man is said to fly swifter than the wind, or to creep along more imperceptibly than a snail: the prick of a pin is represented as a deadly wound, and the thrust of a sword as a slight scratch. Poets and orators are very fond of hyperboles; but great care must be taken, that, in heightening the image or expression, we do not carry it to extravagance.—SHAKESPEARE abounds with beauti-

 ful

ful hyperboles.—How admirably does CASSIUS describe Cæsar's boundless power and ambition!

" Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
" Like a Colossus; and we petty men
" Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
" To find ourselves dishonourable graves."

Hear RICHARD descanting upon his deformity——

" I that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty,
" To strut before a wanton, ambling nymph;
" I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
" Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
" Deform'd, unfinish'd, sent before my time
" Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
" And that so lamely, and unfashionably,
" That dogs bark at me as I halt by them."

But if we wish for a specimen of hyperbolical rant and extravagance, we need only turn to LEE, who thus describes a woman in grief:

" ——I found her on the shore,
" In all the storm of grief, yet beautiful,
" Pouring forth tears at such a lavish rate,
" That, were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
" The wrath of Heav'n, and quench'd the mighty ruin."

We come next to *Figures*, by which are meant certain forms or positions given to our words and thoughts, in order to heighten their beauty or increase their effect, somewhat like the *attitudes*, in which painters draw even single portraits, as well as whole groupes, to render them more striking, or shew them to greater advantage. But though nothing can shed greater lustre on language than the discreet use of figures; yet, as we think this depends more on natural sensibility and good taste than on rules of art, we should be sorry to load the memory, or distract the

the attention of the young student, by a catalogue almost without end of hard names and puzzling examples, that include a great many real defects and abuses of language in the list of rhetorical flourishes. It is enough for our purpose to describe the most important of them in the manner of CICERO, while we pass over a great number which he has noticed, in compliance with the general practice and false taste of the professors of his time.

Among the *Figures of Words*, as they are called, we may easily point out and exemplify the effect produced by *Repetition*, by *Suppression*, by *Contrast*, by *Gradation*, by *seeming Correction*, and by *sudden Exclamations*.—By *repetition*, as, Shall we never see an end to this war, this desolating war?——" By whose advice vindictive counsels were pursued,—by whose advice false representations were made,—by whose advice malice and ill-will were made principles of governing a free people,—all these are questions that will be asked." By *suppression*, when we leave out the conjunctive particles to shew our earnestness, or the rapidity of our career, as, men, women, children, all were indiscriminately put to the sword. By *antitheses* or *contrast*, as, " Custom is the plague of wise men, and the idol of fools."—" He can bribe, but he cannot seduce; he can buy, but he cannot gain; he can lie, but he cannot deceive."—By a *climax*, when the meaning of words rises in a sort of *gradation*, as, She starts, she runs, she flies—A man, a hero, almost a God.

" The cloud-capt tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
" The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
" Yea, all that it inhabit, shall dissolve,
" And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
" Leave not a wreck behind."

By *pretended correction*, when we reprove ourselves, that we may seem to speak without artifice or partiality; as,

 " His

"His bravery, I should have said, his intrepidity, his heroism excited universal astonishment." By breaking out into a *sudden exclamation*, to express wonder, abhorrence, or grief; as, "Oh, Heavens! Ah! shocking! Alas, that ever I was born!"

But though some of the other *figures of words*, which CICERO seems to recommend, will not bear the light of rational criticism, yet we may adopt, almost implicitly, or with very few exceptions, his excellent summary of the *figures of thought or sentiment*.

The Orator, says this great master of eloquence, will sometimes exhibit an idea in different points of view; and when he has started a good argument, he will dwell upon it with an honest exultation:—he will extenuate what is unfavourable, and have frequent recourse to raillery:—he will sometimes deviate from his plan, and seem to alter his first purpose:—he will inform his audience beforehand what are the principal points upon which he intends to rest his cause:—he will collect and enforce the arguments which he has already discussed:—he will check an ardent expression, or boldly reiterate what he has said:—he will close a lively paragraph with some weighty and convincing sentiment: he will press upon his adversary by repeated interrogations:—he will reason with himself, and answer questions of his own proposing:—he will throw out expressions which he designs to be understood differently from what they seem to mean:—he will pretend to doubt what is most proper to be said, and in what order:—he will divide an action or subject into its several parts and circumstances, to render it more striking:—he will make a shew of passing over a circumstance which might have been urged to advantage:—he will secure himself against the known preju-

dices of his audience :—he will turn the very circumstance, which is alleged against him, to the disadvantage of his antagonist :—he will frequently appeal to his hearers, and sometimes to his opponent : he will represent the very language and manners of the persons he is speaking of :—he will introduce irrational and even inanimate beings, as addressing themselves to his audience :—he will, to serve some necessary purpose, steal off their attention from the point in debate :—he will often move them to mirth and laughter :—he will answer every thing which he foresees will be objected :—he will compare similar incidents; refer to past examples; and, by way of amplification, assign their distinguishing qualities to opposite characters and circumstances :—he will check an impertinent plea, which may interrupt his argument :—he will pretend not to mention what he might have urged to good effect :—he will caution his hearers against the various artifices and subterfuges, which may be employed to deceive them :—he will sometimes appear to speak with an honest and unguarded freedom :—he will avow his resentment :—he will intreat :—he will earnestly supplicate :—he will apologize :—he will seem for a moment to forget himself :—he will express his hearty good wishes for the deserving, and will vent his execrations against notorious villany :—and now and then he will descend imperceptibly to the most tender and insinuating familiarities.

To this descriptive summary of the beauties of composition, its eloquent author adds a few more, to which, he says, the orator will not fail to attend, such as brevity, where the subject requires it ;—a lively and pathetic description of interesting events ;—an impassioned exaggeration of important circumstances ;—an earnestness of expression, which implies more than is said ;—a well-

timed variety of humor;—and a happy imitation of different characters and dispositions *.

All these *Figures of thought or sentiment* will be found exemplified in our proposed selection of popular, parliamentary and judicial orations; but some of them are of so much importance to every public speaker, that a few remarks may now be necessary to prepare the pupil for the easier discovery and imitation of them in his farther progress.

One of the most useful figures of rhetoric is *Amplification*. It consists in a masterly exaggeration of all the circumstances of any object, which we want to place in a strong light, whether a good or a bad one.—" What is an army," says the Duke of ARGYLE, " without discipline, subordination, and obedience? What, but a rabble of licentious vagrants, set free from the common restraints of decency, exempted from the necessity of labor, betrayed by idleness to debauchery, and let loose to prey upon the people? Such a herd can only awe the villages, and bluster in the streets; but can never be able to oppose an enemy, or defend the nation by which they are supported."

Sometimes Amplification results from presenting the same thought in different points of view, to render the impression stronger and deeper. Lord BOLINGBROKE and Mr. BURKE eminently possessed the talent of re-producing any valuable thought with fresh decorations, and always with a happy mixture of novelty and ardor. Observe Nature, when our passions are strongly excited.—The same thought recurs incessantly, and often in the same form. Art follows the like course, but varies a little the external dress; and thus the important idea is not suffered to pass away like a flash of lightning,

* Orator ad Brutum.

but

but being repeated again and again with new force and graces, sinks into the mind, and makes an indeliable impression.

It is well observed by LONGINUS, that the effect of amplification is greatly heightened by a climax, when the great incidents are heaped one upon another, till they ascend by a continued gradation to a summit of grandeur. Dr. SMITH, in a note, gives the following example from TILLOTSON:

"'Tis pleasant to be virtuous and good, because that is to excel many others: 'tis pleasant to grow better, because that is to excel ourselves: nay, 'tis pleasant even to mortify and subdue our lusts, because that is victory: 'tis pleasant to command our appetites and passions, and to keep them in due order, within the bounds of reason and religion, because this is empire."

*Interrogations* are forcible appeals to the sympathy of others for the justness of the sentiment which we feel, or to their understandings for the evidence of the truth which we want to enforce.

"Why," said Sir JOHN BERNARD, in his opposition to the rigorous measures for manning the fleet in 1741, "Why should we imagine that the race of men, for whom these cruelties are preparing, have less sensibility than ourselves? Why should we believe that they will suffer without complaint, and be injured without resentment? Why should we conceive that they will not at once deliver themselves, and punish their oppressors by deserting that country, where they are considered as felons, and laying hold on those rewards and privileges which no other government will deny them?"

*Images*, *visions*, *striking scenes*, and *animated portraits*, all included in the figure called by rhetoricians *Hy-*

*potyposis*, add considerable force to impassioned language, when, as LONGINUS suggests, the imagination is ſo warmed and affected, that you seem to behold yourſelf the very things you are describing, and to display them to the life before the eyes of an audience.

The dagger scene in MACBETH is a masterpiece of this kind. At the instant that MACBETH is preparing for a bloody act, the horror of the deed disorders his senses; and he starts at frightful images that have no reality. He thinks he sees before him the murderous dagger, and calls reason to his aid for the purpose of convincing himself that it is mere fancy—but in vain—his mind is still haunted by the false creation; and his emotions are so strongly expressed, that the hearers and spectators are seized with the like visionary terror.——

" Is this a dagger which I see before me,
" The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
" I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
" Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
" To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
" A dagger of the mind, a false creation
" Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
" I see thee yet, in form as palpable
" As this which now I draw——
" Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;
" And such an instrument I was to use.
" Mine eyes are made the fools o' th' other senses,
" Or else worth all the rest—I see thee still;
" And, on thy blade and dudgeon, gouts of blood;
" Which was not so before—There's no such thing:
" It is the bloody business, which informs
" Thus to mine eyes.—Now o'er one half the world
" Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
" The curtain'd sleep: now witchcraft celebrates
" Pale HECATE's offerings; and wither'd murder,

" Alarum'd

"Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
"Whose howl 's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
"With TARQUIN's ravishing strides, tow'rds his design
"Moves like a ghost.—Thou sure and firm-set earth,
"Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
"Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
"And take the present horror from the time,
"Which now suits with it— (*A bell rings.*)
"I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
"Hear it not, DUNCAN; for it is a knell,
"That summons thee to heaven, or to hell."

Sir GEORGE SAVILLE, in his speech against Mr. WEDDERBURNE's motion for impressing seamen from every protection in the year 1779, exclaims, "Would the learned Gentleman not let one father, one husband, one brother, or one child escape, in this general scene of oppression and injustice! Methinks I hear the heart-felt shrieks of the miserable wife this instant piercing my ears, and intreating, in accents of rage and despair, the midnight ruffian not to drag from her side her tender and affectionate husband, the father of her children and her only support! I think I hear the aged and helpless parent, in accents of sinking woe, misery, and distress bewailing the loss of his dutiful and beloved son! I confess I am filled with horror at the various ills and miseries this instant inflicting in every part of these kingdoms, contrary to every principle of law, justice, and humanity!"

One of those striking *images*, when blended with an argument, gives it almost irresistible force. "It was not I," said the Earl of SHELBURNE in his defence of the peace in 1783, "It was not I, who voluntarily yielded up the independence of America:—it was the evil star of Britain:—it was the blunders of a former administration: —it was the power of revolted subjects, and the mighty arms of the House of Bourbon."

Among

Among the moſt brilliant figures of eloquence, we may also place *Prosopopœia*, or *personification*, which attributes life, sensibility, action, and speech to the brute creation; and even to inanimate objects; and *Apostrophe*, which is an addreſs to the absent, or to the dead, as if they were present and liſtening to us.

When CICERO introduced MILO speaking to the citizens of Rome, *Prosopopœia* is beautifully delineated:

"Should he, holding up his bloody sword, cry out, "Attend, I pray, hearken, O Citizens! I have killed CLODIUS; by this sword, and by this right hand, I have kept off his rage from your throats, which no laws no courts of judicature could restrain: it is by my means that justice, equity, laws, liberty, shame, and modesty, remain in the city."—Is it to be feared how the city should bear this declaration? Is there any one who in such a case would not approve and commend it?"

The *Personification* of Pride in POPE's Essay on Man admits of a certain splendor expressive of the ostentation of the speaker, and the riches and grandeur of the objects introduced.

"Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
"Earth for whose use:" Pride answers, "'Tis for mine,
"For me kind Nature wakes her genial power,
"Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flower;
"Annual for me the grape, the rose renew
"The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
"For me the mine a thousand treasures brings,
"For me health gushes from a thousand springs.
"Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise,
"My footſtool earth, my canopy the skies."

Poets have been prodigal of this figure, but Orators more sparing.

As an example of the *Apostrophe* we shall cite the following beautiful one of CICERO in his Oration for MILO, when

when speaking of the death of CLODIUS. "O ye judges! it was not by human counſel, nor by any thing less than the immediate care of the immortal gods, that this event has taken place. The very divinities themselves, who beheld that monster fall, seemed to be moved, and to have inflicted their vengeance upon him. I appeal to, I call to witness, you, O ye hills and groves of Alba! you, the demolished Alban altars! ever accounted holy by the Romans, and coëval with our religion, but which CLODIUS, in his mad fury, having first cut down, and levelled the most sacred groves, had sunk under heaps of common buildings;—I appeal to you, I call you to witneſs, whether your altars, your divinities, your powers, which he had polluted with all kinds of wickedness, did not avenge themselves when this wretch was extirpated? And thou, O holy Jupiter! from the height of thy ſacred mount, whose lakes, groves, and boundaries, he had so often contaminated with his detestable impurities; and you, the other deities, whom he had inſulted, at length opened your eyes to punish this enormous offender. By you, by you, and in your sight was the slow, but the righteous and merited vengeance executed upon him."

Both *Prosopopœia* and *Apostrophe* were carried by ancient Orators to a greater degree of boldness than would be allowed in modern composition.

Examples of the other figures will be found, as before intimated, in our selection of speeches; but we cannot too strongly impress on the mind of the young orator the remarks of CICERO, QUINTILIAN, and LONGINUS on the diſcreet uſe of those ornaments.

CICERO considers figures as the chief sources of light, of lustre, of energy, of beauty in language: he calls them *the eyes of Eloquence;* but, he adds, "I would not have eyes,

eyes scattered over the whole body, lest the other members should lose their respective functions *."

QUINTILIAN's observation is exactly in the same spirit. "As figures, he says, when made use of seasonably, beautify language, so, when immoderately sought after, they become the greatest blemishes. It is ridiculous to introduce them without any regard to the force of the sentiment, or weight of matter; but even when proper, they must not be too crowded. We should first consider how far they may be suited to the occasion, the person, the moment. As the object of the greater part of them is to please the fancy, who could endure an orator attempting to excite the strongest emotions of passion in nicely balanced phrases and with harmonious cadence? A man, so solicitous about words cannot be very strongly affected; and where art is so pompously displayed, we cannot suppose that there is much truth or sincerity †."

The best method of concealing any appearance of art in figurative language is explained by LONGINUS with his usual sagacity and precision. "A figure," he observes, "is most dexterously applied, when it cannot be discerned that it is a figure. This can only be effected by a due mixture of the sublime and the pathetic, which increases the force and removes the suspicion that commonly attends on the use of figures. For, veiled as it were, and wrapt up in such beauty and grandeur, they seem to disappear, and securely to defy discovery. As the stars are quite dimmed and obscured, when the sun breaks out in all his blazing rays, so the artifices of rhetoric are entirely

* Ego hæc lumina orationis velut oculos quosdam eloquentiæ credo; sed neque oculos esse toto corpore velim, ne cætera membra cum officium perdant.

† Cum in his rebus, cura verborum deroget affectibus fidem; et ubicunque ars ostentatur, veritas abesse videatur.

tirely overshadowed by the superior splendor of sublime thoughts. A parallel illustration may be drawn from painting; for when several colors of light and shade are drawn upon the same surface, those of light seem not only to rise out of the piece, but even to be much nearer to the sight: so the sublime and pathetic, either by means of a great affinity they bear to the springs and movements of our souls, or by their own superlative lustre, always outshine the adjacent figures, whose art they shadow, and whose appearance they cover, in a veil of superior beauties."

To the above account of the figures of rhetoric, and of their judicious use, it may seem necessary to add some directions respecting the arrangement of words, with a view to harmony, or the agreeable combination of sounds. But we are relieved from the trouble of any long details on this head, as, in the English language, our words must follow one another in the natural order of our ideas; and a knowledge of the few inversions allowable either in poetry or prose is easily acquired without rules. The ear also, improved by reading our best poets and orators, will be a sufficiently accurate guide in the choice of sounds and the harmonious structure of sentences. But we must never sacrifice sense to sound, nor must we introduce any superfluous or unmeaning expression, merely to fill up the chasms in a period, or to give it a smoother flow, and a more tuneful cadence.

The degree of exactness to which the ancients reduced the modulation, as it may be termed, of their prose, as well as of their poetry, is indeed astonishing. Several books were written on the subject by DEMETRIUS PHALAREUS, DIONYSIUS HALICARNASSENSIS, CICERO, QUINTILIAN, and LONGINUS. Dr. SMITH, in his notes on the latter, takes occasion to observe, that the free language, which

which we use, will not endure such refined regulation, for fear of encumbrance and restraint. Harmony, indeed, it is capable of to a high degree, yet such as flows not from precepts, but from the genius and judgment of composers. A good ear, he adds, is worth a thousand rules, since, with it, the periods will be rounded and sweetened; and, without it, all endeavours will be vain and ineffectual.

But though the rules of harmony, laid down with so much care and minuteness by those celebrated Greek and Roman critics, would be of very little service to the English orator, we cannot so rapidly pass over their valuable instructions on a variety of other important topics. Among these, we have now to notice CICERO's remarks on *Style*, which hold good in every language, and cannot be too often repeated, or too earnestly inculcated in the study of eloquence. By *Style* is meant the manner, the tone, the color, the character, that prevails in a piece of composition, or in any part of it. There are three sorts of style, the simple, the middling, and the sublime. CICERO, in order to render his description of each of them more animated, has given us the portraits of three orators, one distinguished for simplicity and ease, the second for peaceful and unaspiring mediocrity, the third for copiousness, elevation, and energy; and has shewn how perfect eloquence results from the admirable combination of the three different powers. Let us view those finished models of excellence in regular succession.

As the simple and easy speaker imitates the language of common conversation, he differs from persons unskilled in eloquence rather in reality than in appearance. For this reason, those who hear him, though they know no more of the art of speaking than children, yet feel a confidence that they can exprefs themselves in the same manner; and the

the unaffected simplicity of his language appears very imitable to an ignorant observer, though nothing will be found less so by him who makes the trial. For, if I may so express myself, though his veins are not over-stocked with blood, his juices must be sound and good; and though he is not possessed of any extraordinary strength, he must have a healthy constitution. For this purpose, we must first release him from the shackles of harmonious modulation; for there is, you know, a kind of modulation to be observed by an orator, which we shall treat of in the sequel, but it is to be used in a different species of eloquence, not in the present. His language, therefore, must be free and unconfined, but not loose and irregular, that he may appear to walk at ease, without reeling or tottering. He will not be at the pains of making all his expressions exactly coalesce; for those breaks, which are made by a collision of vowels, have now and then an agreeable effect, and betray the far from unpleasing negligence of a man more solicitous about things than words. But though he is not to labor at a measured flow and a masterly arrangement of his words, he must be careful in other respects. For even those small and inconsiderable objects are not to be treated carelessly, but rather with a sort of designed negligence; for, as some females are more becoming in a dishabille, so this artless kind of eloquence has her charms, though she appears in an undress. There is something in both which renders them agreeable, without striking the eye. Here therefore all the glitter of ornament, like that of jewels and diamonds, must be laid aside; nor must we apply even the crisping iron to curl the hair: there must be no paint, no washes, no artificial white or red; but neatness and elegance must be our only aim. Our style must be pure and correct: we must speak with clearness and precision, and be always attentive

attentive to appear in character. There is one thing, however, which must never be omitted, and which is reckoned by THEOPHRASTUS to be one of the chief beauties of composition, I mean that sweet and flowing ornament, a plentiful intermixture of lively sentiments, which seem to result from a natural fund of good sense, and are particularly graceful in the orator we are now describing. But he will be very modest in using the stores or furniture of eloquence; for we have a kind of furniture belonging to us, which consists in the various ornaments both of our sentiments and language. The ornaments of language are two-fold: the one relates to words, as they ſtand singly; and the other, as they are connected together. A single word is then said to be well chosen out of these which are proper and in common use, when it sounds agreeably, and is the best which could have been taken to express our meaning. Among borrowed and figurative words, or those which are not used in their literal sense, we may reckon the *metaphor*, the *metonomy*, and the rest of the *tropes*, as also compounded and new-made words, and such as are obsolete and out of date; but obsolete words should rather be considered as proper ones, with this only difference that we seldom make use of them. As to words in connection, these also may be considered as ornamental, when they have a certain gracefulness which would be deſtroyed by changing their order, though the meaning would still remain the same; but with regard to the ornaments of thought or sentiment, which lose nothing of their beauty by varying the position of the words, they are indeed very numerous, though only a few of them are remarkably striking.

The orator then, who is distinguished by the simplicity of his manner, always implying correctness and elegance, will be sparing in the use of new words, easy and

modest

modest in his metaphors, and very cautious in the use of words which are antiquated; and as to the other ornaments of language and sentiment, he will be equally plain and reserved. But, in the use of metaphors, he will perhaps take greater liberties, because they are frequently introduced in conversation, not only by well-bred men, but even by rustics and peasants; for we often hear say, that the vine *shoots out* its buds, that the fields are *thirsty*, the corn *lively*, and the grain *rich* and *flourishing*. Such expressions are indeed rather bold; but the resemblance between the metaphor and the object is either remarkably obvious, or when the latter has no proper name to express it, the metaphor is so far from appearing to be labored, that we seem to use it merely to explain our meaning. This therefore is an ornament, in which our artless orator may indulge himself rather freely, yet not so openly as in the diffusive and lofty species of eloquence; for that indecorum, which is best understood by comparing it with its opposite quality, will even here be visible, when a metaphor is too conspicuous, or when this simple and dispassionate sort of language is interrupted by a bold ornament, which would have been proper enough in a different kind of style.

As to that sort of ornament which regards the position of words, and embellishes it with those studied graces, which are considered by the Greeks as so many *attitudes* of language, and are therefore called *figures*, a name which is likewise extended to the flowers of sentiment, the orator before us will make use even of this, though with great caution and moderation. He will conduct himself as if he was setting out an entertainment; and while he carefully avoids a splendid magnificence, he will not only be plain and frugal, but neat and elegant, and make his choice accordingly; for there is a kind of gen-

 teel

teel parsimony, by which his character is distinguished from that of others. He will therefore avoid the more conspicuous ornaments above-mentioned, such as the contrasting or opposing of word to word,—concluding the several members of a sentence with the same cadence, or confining them to the same measure,—and all the studied prettinesses which are formed by the change of a letter, or an artful play of sound,—that, if possible, there may not be the slightest appearance or even suspicion of a design to please. As to those repetitions, which require an earnest and forcible exertion of the voice, these also would be equally out of character in this humble species of style; but he may use the other ornaments at his pleasure, provided he checks and interrupts the flow of his language, and softens it off by using familiar expressions, and such metaphors as are plain and obvious. Nay, even as to the figures of sentiment, he may sometimes indulge in those which are not remarkably bold and striking. Thus, for instance, we must not allow him to introduce the republic as speaking, nor to fetch up the dead from their graves, nor to crowd a multitude of ideas into the same period. These efforts demand a firmer constitution, and should neither be required nor expected from the simple orator before us; for, as to his voice, so likewise in his language, he should be ever easy and composed: yet there are many of the nobler ornaments which may be admitted even here, though always in a plainer and more artless habit than in any other species of eloquence; for such is the character we have assigned him: his gesture also will be neither pompous nor theatrical, but consist in a moderate and easy sway of the body, and derive much of its efficacy from the countenance,—not a stiff and affected countenance, but such a one as handsomely corresponds with his sentiments.

This

This kind of oratory will likewise be frequently enlivened by those turns of wit and pleasantry, which in speaking have a much greater effect than is imagined. There are two sorts of them; the one consisting in smart sayings and quick repartees, and the other in what is called *humor*. Our orator will make use of both; of the latter in his narratives, to make them lively and entertaining; and of the other either in giving or retorting a stroke of ridicule, of which there are several kinds, but the powers of which are not to be employed too often, lest we sink into scurrility;—nor in loose and indecent language, lest we degenerate into wantonness and buffoonery,—nor with the least degree of petulance and abuse, lest we appear audacious and ill-bred,—nor levelled against the unfortunate, lest we incur the censure of inhumanity,—nor against atrocious crimes, lest we raise a laugh where we ought to excite abhorrence,—nor, in the last place, should they be used unseasonably, or when the character either of the speaker or the hearer, and the circumstances of time and place forbid it; otherwise we should grossly fail in that decorum, of which we have already said so much *. We should likewise avoid all affected witticisms, which appear not to be thrown out occasionally, but to be dragged from the closet; for such are generally cold and insipid. It is also improper to jest upon our friends,

* There is nothing which CICERO so earnestly inculcates as an attention to decorum, a just sense of which is not less important in speech than in any other part of our conduct. It is through an ignorance of this, he says, that people err most frequently; for the same strain of language and of sentiment cannot be suited to every fortune, every rank, every age, every place, time, or audience. We should always consider what is becoming in every part of a discourse, as well as in every action of life—what is suggested by the nature of the subject,—what is consistent with the characters of those who speak, and of those who hear.

or upon persons of quality, or to give any strokes of wit which may appear ill-natured or malicious. We should aim only at our enemies, and even at these, not upon every occasion, or without any distinction of character, or with the same invariable turn of ridicule. Under these restrictions, our artless orator will play off his wit and humor.

Such is the idea which I have formed of a simple and an easy speaker, who is likewise a very masterly one.

But there is a second character, more diffusive and somewhat stronger than the simple and artless one we have been describing, though considerably inferior to that copious and all-commanding eloquence that will be noticed in the sequel. In this second or intermediate kind, though there is but a moderate exertion of the nerves and sinews of oratory, there is abundance of melody and sweetness. It is much fuller and richer than the close and accurate style above mentioned, but less elevated than the pompous and diffusive: all the ornaments of lauguage may be employed in it without reserve; and the flow of the numbers should be ever soft and harmonious. Many of the Greeks have practised it with success; but, in my opinion, they must all yield the palm to DEMETRIUS PHALEREUS, whose eloquence is ever mild and placid, and bespangled with a most elegant variety of metaphors and other tropes, like so many stars. By metaphors I mean expressions, which, either for the sake of ornament, or through the natural poverty of our language, are removed, and, as it were, transplanted from their proper objects to others, by way of similitude. As to tropes in general, they are particular forms of expression, in which the proper name of a thing is supplied by another, which conveys the same meaning, but is borrowed from its adjuncts or effects.—

 This

This species of eloquence, I mean the middling or temperate, is likewise embellished with all the brilliant figures of language, and many of the figures of sentiment. By this, moreover, the most extensive and refined topics of science are handsomely unfolded, and all the weapons of argument are employed without violence. But what need have I to say more? Such speakers are the common offspring of philosophy; and were the nervous and more striking orator to keep out of sight, these alone would fully answer our wishes; for they are masters of a brilliant, a florid, a picturesque, and a well-wrought style, which is interwoven with all ths beautiful embroidery both of language and sentiment.

The third character is the extensive, the copious, the majestic orator, who possesses the powers of eloquence in their full extent. This is the man whose enchanting and diffusive language is so much admired by listening nations, that they have tamely suffered eloquence to rule the world; —but an eloquence whose course is rapid and sonorous! an eloquence which every one gazes at, and admires, and despairs to equal!—This is the eloquence that bends and sways the passions!—This is the eloquence that alarms and sooths them at pleasure!—This is the eloquence that sometimes tears up all before it like a whirlwind; and, at other times, steals impreceptibly upon the senses, and probes to the bottom of the heart—the eloquence that engrafts opinions which are new, and eradicates the old; but yet is widely different from the two characters above-mentioned.

He who exerts himself in the simple and accurate character, and speaks neatly and smartly, without aiming any higher, he, by this alone, if carried to perfection, becomes a great, if not the greatest of orators; nor does he walk

upon slippery ground, so that if he has but learned to read firm, he is in no danger of falling. Also the middle kind of orator, who is distinguished by his equability, provided he only draws up his forces to advantage, fears not the perilous and doubtful hazards of a public exhibition; and, though sometimes he may not succeed to his wishes, yet he is never exposed to an absolute defeat; for, as he never soars, his fall must be inconsiderable. But the orator whom we regard as the Prince of his profession, the nervous, the fierce, the flaming orator, if he is born for this alone, and only practises and applies himself to this, without tempering his copiousness with the two inferior characters of eloquence, is of all others the most contemptible. For the plain and simple orator, as speaking acutely and expertly, has an appearance of wisdom and good sense; and the middle kind of orator is sufficiently recommended by his sweetness; but the copious and diffusive speaker, if he has no other qualification, will scarcely appear to be in his senses. For he who can say nothing calmly, nothing gently, nothing methodically, nothing clearly, distinctly, or humorously, (though a number of causes should be so managed throughout, and others in one or more of their parts,) he, moreover, who proceeds to amplify and exaggerate without preparing the attention of his hearers, will appear to rave before men of understanding, and to reel, like a person intoxicated, in the midst of sober company.

He then is an orator indeed, who can speak upon humble subjects with simplicity and art,—upon weighty ones with energy and pathos,—and upon those of middling import with calmness and moderation*.

* These extracts are taken with very few alterations from JONES's translation of CICERO's "Orator ad BRUTUM."

As

As all the smaller varieties of style are absorbed or included in those three grand distinctions, instead of vainly attempting to throw any new light on a subject illustrated by the full blaze of CICERO's genius, I shall beg leave to explain the method which I have found by experience best calculated to form the style of youth, and to put their talents to the utmost stretch of improving exertion.

I am surprised that teachers have not been often struck with the bad effect of putting into the hands of boys books of extracts, or selections from the works of admired writers, and making them get by heart the most striking passages as ornaments of the memory. Such a practice has a direct tendency to fill their minds with a confused jumble of splendid images, to vitiate their taste; and, when they take the pen in hand, to make them disfigure their own writings by strained attempts at something very fine and brilliant, in imitation of what they have been taught to admire. They are accustomed to look at prominent beauties, and never think of the less remarkable but more useful parts, which form the ground of the whole, and out of which all real beauties must naturally arise. No wonder, that such a course of reading and study should produce a great number of pedants and coxcombs! "Distilled books," says Lord BACON, "are like common distilled waters, flashy things."

It is therefore of the utmost importance to direct the attention of youth to every part of a good speech, a good essay, a good work, in order to mark the easy transitions of the orator or the writer from one style to another, as the varying nature of the subject and the sentiments may require. The best books that can be put into the hands of a boy, as soon as he has learned to read pretty well, and begin to understand what he reads, are the Spectator, because he will find there perfect models of that elegant simplicity of language, the attainment of which should be

the first object of literary pursuit. Read every essay with him, and endeavour, in the way of agreeable conversation, to make him observe the peculiarities of manner that mark each of the different writers. You must continue this amusing exercise till he can readily distinguish their respective productions, particularly those of ADDISON, when you will have juster cause to rejoice at his proficiency, than if he could repeat from memory half the Beauties of the Poets.

This method of reading the Spectator, with a view to the improvement of the pupil's taste and judgment, must be continued for a year at least, as I would only have him to read one Number every day, so that it may appear like a pleasant relaxation from his other School duties. After going through the whole of the eight volumes twice, he will derive much benefit from reading a third time the papers only that were written by ADDISON, in order to catch, if possible, some of the writer's spirit, and to become familiar with his mode of thinking, as well as of arranging and expressing his thoughts. Then, and not before, the pupil's exercises may be changed from the study to the imitation of his favorite author; in which attempt you can render him essential service by the following method.

Fix upon any of the Numbers, with which you have perceived that your scholar is highly pleased, and shew him how to make a good analysis of it; and, in a few days after, when the exact words of the original may be supposed to have escaped his memory, let him endeavour to fill up the analysis; and then compare his own language with that of ADDISON. These exercises frequently repeated will bring a boy of any abilities nearer and nearer to the wished-for resemblance; and will also give him a last-

a lasting dislike to the incorrectness, inelegance, turgidity, or affectation of other writers.

Every Tutor will readily perceive that I do not wish to confine youthful genius to servile imitation, but to place the purest models before the student, and give, at the same time, full scope to his own originality. I have entered into minuter details on this head, because I think that it is too much neglected. But I am not going to write a treatise on education, nor do I wish to interfere with the authority of any Teacher in the farther direction of his pupil's studies. What I have said of the best method of imitating the beautiful simplicity of ADDISON, may be applied to the attainment of any other style, or the imitation of any other writer. Extensive reading and imitative essays will gradually prepare the student for bolder attempts at original composition. Whatever may be his favorite pursuit, let him fix his eye upon some illustrious leader in the same walk; and when he feels his own strength, let him exert it with all the ardor of noble emulation. The preference which he gives to a congenial writer, will not hinder him from availing himself of the thoughts and productions of others, which he knows how to assimilate to his own style, in the same manner as a vigorous and well-exercised stomach converts different sorts of food into one current of nutritious fluid.

## SECT. IV.

### OF THE FOURTH ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF THE ORATOR.

I BEFORE observed that the old Rhetoricians included in the word *Pronunciation* every thing that related to voice, look, and gesture, or what are the same things, utterance,

terance, expression of countenance, and action. We now more frequently make use of the word *Elocution* in the like comprehensive sense; and volumes upon volumes have been written to facilitate so useful and important an accomplishment. Such a multitude of rules and instructions, however, serve only to give an appearance of difficulty to an attainment which may be acquired with great ease and pleasure. The principles of a just and graceful delivery are not many, and may be fully illustrated in half a dozen lessons: they do not depend upon caprice, upon fancy, or fashion: they are founded in nature: they despise the aid of artificial ornaments; and are always most impressive, when laid before us in their own genuine simplicity.

A slow, distinct articulation is obviously the first requisite. The finest sallies of wit and humor, all the force of the most persuasive arguments, would be lost in a confused, cluttering rapidity of utterance. Any bad habit of this sort must be corrected before we can aspire to higher graces; but it is a great satisfaction to be assured, that lisping, stammering, and most of the other impediments of speech, which are often falsely ascribed to nature, proceed wholly from the nursery, and will yield to judicious and persevering correctives. Here I cannot help expressing a wish, that, in the choice of a nurse, a little attention would always be paid to her tones of voice and her language, as well as to the physical properties of her breast-milk. From her and from the mother the child is to learn the first elements of speech; and the impressions then received, whether favorable or the contrary, will not be very easily effaced. "It is a circumstance of great importance," says CICERO, "what sort of people we are used to converse with at home, especially in the more early part of life, and what sort of language we have been accustomed

customed to hear from our tutors and parents, not excepting the mother. We have all read the letters of CORNELIA, and are satisfied that her sons were not so much nurtured in their mother's lap, as in the elegance and purity of her language *."

But to resume our explanation of the principles of a just and graceful delivery, it is not enough to make ourselves clearly and distinctly heard. An uniform sameness of tone would soon tire, would soon disgust the ear. Besides, it would be expecting too great a tribute of politeness from others to suppose them alive and awake to every thing we may have to say. We must therefore seem to favor their indolence and languor, by passing in a low tone and hasty manner over the less important parts, and raising the voice on those words only which are peculiarly dear to us; upon which the whole stress of the observation or sentiment reſts; and to which, therefore, we take care by the most commanding sound to rouse the attention of our hearers.

If all men were philosophers,—if we were all insusceptible of emotions and passions,—and were constantly swayed by the cool, temperate influence of reason alone, —then a clear distinct utterance, and a forcible emphasis, would require no farther graces to constitute an impressive mode of delivery. But we know from experience, that, in general, we must gain the hearts of men, before we can hope to convince their understandings:—we must not leave them cool approvers of our counsels, but hurry them on with irresistible impetuosity:—the glowing words must often be charged with electric fire, to force their way to the inmoſt recesses of the soul.

———" This magic art
" Must strike each string that vibrates on the heart:
" With taste, with judgment, energy refin'd,
" Must trace the various passions of the mind:

† De claris Oratoribus.

" Must

"Must to the pow'rs of genius vigor give,
"And bid each animated sentence live."

Altered from SHERIDAN.

To acquire then such a compass and variety in the tones of the voice, as to adapt them with ease to every sentiment, is the last attainment in the art of reading well. But let us here point out a very common mistake with many persons, whose voices are in other respects sweet and expressive. From a false notion of melody, they adopt a singing tone, and by the uniformly elevation and depression of the voice, compose us to sleep, with their tuneful lullabies. POPE's remarks on true harmony in versification are equally applicable to the just modulations of the voice in reading and speaking:

"'Tis not enough no harshness gives offenee,
"The sound must seem an echo to the sense.
"Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
"And the smooth stream in smoother number flows:
"But, when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
"The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
"When AJAX strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
"The line too labors, and the words move slow:
"Not so, when swift CAMILLA scours the plain,
"Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main.
"Hear how TIMOTHEUS' vary'd lays surprise,
"And bid alternate passions fall, and rise!
"While, at each change, the Son of Lybian JOVE
"Now burns with glory, and then melts with love:
"Now his fierce eyes with trembling fury glow,
"Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow!
"Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
"And the world's victor stood subdu'd by sound."

Essay on Criticism.

It is presumed that all the precepts which have been laid down with endless detail on the art of reading and speaking,

speaking, as far as respects utterance, may be reduced to three heads now explained, a distinct articulation, a just emphasis, and the well-varied tones of sentiment and the passions. Nothing therefore remains to be added but a few remarks on the astonishing effect of proper looks and gestures. From these, language derives its most irresistible power: it is sure to enter the heart, when the sounds are accompanied with action—when the eye and the ear receive the impression at the same instant.

DEMOSTHENES having been asked what was the first and most essential qualification of a public speaker, answered, *Action*. Being asked, what was the second, he replied as before, *Action*. Being asked, what was the third, he answered again, *Action*—still continuing to make the same reply till they had done questioning him, giving them to understand, that, without action, all the other qualifications of a speaker were to be considered as of little or no moment,—a truth which he himself had been taught too sensibly not to abide by it for ever. After intense application to private study, and notwithstanding the uncommon vigor of his genius, and the matchless energy of his language, he was ill-received by the people till he learned how to manage his weapons,—how to direct his thunder,—how to rouse or allay the passions at pleasure by the powers of utterance and action. On the mortifying failure of his first attempt to speak in public, a Player of his acquaintance made him sensible of his defect, and clearly discovered to him that, without animated gestures, the most beautiful language may be compared to a lifeless corpse, and is more likely to chill the hearer than to warm and transport him.

The ancients had a large collection of precepts for regulating the tones and gestures of persons who were to speak in public; and some modern writers have increased the

the number of rules by observations of their own. But the spirit of them is compressed in a few sentences by SHAKESPEARE. This admirable painter of human life had often seen, with heart-felt vexation, his finest portraits, or, to use a theatrical phrase, his most finished characters cruelly murdered by the ignorance or affectation of the performers. He therefore took an opportunity of indirectly censuring their blunders, in the following instructions to a company of players; which he puts into the mouth of HAMLET.

"Speak the ſpeech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue: but, if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier had spoke my lines. And do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus: but use all gently; for, in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh! it offends me to the soul, when I hear a robuſteous, periwig-pated fellow, tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings. It out-herods HEROD: pray you, avoid it.

"Be not too tame, neither; but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, and the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is from the purpose of playing, the end of which both was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature,—to shew virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy of, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of one of which must, in your judgment, o'erweigh a whole theatre of others."

Though

Though I before expressed my disapprobation of the common custom of loading the memories of boys with rules and precepts, yet I would have the young practitioner in Elocution get by heart this excellent summary of useful instructions, as well as LLOYD's beautiful little poem, nearly on the same subject, entitled "The Actor," of which the greater part will be found as useful to the public Orator, as to the Peformer on the Stage.

"The player's province they but vainly try,
"Who want these pow'rs, Deportment, Voice, and Eye.
"The critic sight 'tis only grace can please,
"Nor figure charms us, if it has not ease.
"There are, who think the stature all in all,
"Nor like the hero, if he is not tall.
"The feeling sense all other wants supplies,
"I rate no actor's merit from his size.
"Superior height requires superior grace;
"And what's a giant with a vacant face?
"Theatric monarchs, in their tragic gait,
"Affect to mark the solemn pace of state:
"One foot put forward in position strong,
"The other, like its vassal, dragg'd along:
"So grave each motion, so exact and slow,
"Like wooden monarchs at a puppet-show,
"The mien delights us that has native grace;
"But affectation ill-supplies its place.
"Unskilful actors, like your mimic apes,
"Will writhe the body in a thousand shapes;
"However foreign from the poet's art,
"No tragic hero but admires a start——
"What, though unfeeling of the nervous line,
"Who but allows his attitude is fine?
"While a whole minute equipois'd he stands,
"Till praise dismiss him with her echoing hands!

"Resolv'd,

" Resolv'd, though Nature hate the tedious pause,
" By perseverance to extort applause.
" When ROMEO, sorrowing at his JULIET's doom,
" With eager madness bursts the canvas tomb,
" The sudden whirl, stretch'd leg, and lifted staff,
" Which please the vulgar, make the critic laugh.
" To paint the passion's force, and mark it well,
" The proper action Nature's self will tell:
" No pleasing pow'rs distortions e'er express,
" And nicer judgment always loaths excess.
" In sock or buskin, who o'erleaps the bounds,
" Disgusts our reason, and the taste confounds.
" Of all the evils, which the stage molest,
" I hate your fool who overacts his jest;
" Who murders what the poet finely writ,
" And, like a bungler, haggles all his wit,
" With shrug, and grin, and gesture out of place,
" And writes a foolish comment with his face.
" The word and action should conjointly suit,
" But acting words is labor too minute.
" Grimace will ever lead the judgment wrong;
" While sober humor marks th' impression ſtrong:
" Her proper traits the fixt attention hit;
" And bring me closer to the poet's wit:
" With her delighted o'er each scene I go,
" Well-pleas'd, and not aſham'd of being so.
" But let the generous actor ſtill forbear
" To copy features with a mimic's care.
" 'Tis a poor skill which ev'ry fool can reach,—
" A vile stage custom, honor'd in the breach.
" Worse as more close, the disingenuous art
" But shews the wanton looseness of the heart.
" When I behold a wretch, of talents mean,
" Drag private foibles on the public scene,
" Forsaking Nature's fair and open road,
" To mark some whim, some strange peculiar mode;

" Fir'd

" Fir'd with disgust, I loath his servile plan,
" Despise the mimic, and abhor the man.
" Go to the lame, to hospitals repair,
" And haunt for humor in distortions there!
" Fill up the measure of the motley whim
" With shrug, wink, snuffle, and convulsive limb;
" Then shame at once, to please a trifling age,
" Good sense, good manners, virtue, and the stage!
" 'Tis not enough the voice be sound and clear;
" 'Tis modulation that must charm the ear.
" When desperate heroines grieve with tedious moan,
" And whine their sorrows in a see-saw tone,
" The same soft sounds of unimpassioned woes,
" Can only make the yawning hearers doze.
" The voice all modes of passion can express,
" That marks the proper word with proper stress;
" But none emphatic can that actor call,
" Who lays an equal emphasis on all.
" Some o'er the tongue the labor'd measures roll,
" Slow, and deliberate as the parting toll;
" Point ev'ry stop, mark ev'ry pause so strong,
" Their words, like stage processions, stalk along:
" All affectation but creates disgust;
" And, e'en in speaking, we may seem too just.
" In vain for them the pleasing measure flows,
" Whose recitation runs it all to prose;
" Repeating what the poet sets not down;
" The verb disjointing from its friendly noun;
" While pause and break and repetition join
" To make a discord in each tuneful line
" Some placid natures fill th' allotted scene
" With lifeless drones, insipid and serene;
" While others thunder ev'ry couplet o'er,
" And almost crack your ears with rant and roar.
" More nature oft and finer strokes are shewn
" In the low whisper than tempestuous tone;

"And HAMLET's hollow voice, and fixt amaze,
"More powerful terror to the mind conveys,
"Than he who, swol'n with big impetuous rage,
"Bullies the bulky phantom of the stage.
"He, who in earnest studies o'er his part,
"Will find true nature cling about his heart.
"The modes of grief are not included all
"In the white handkerchief and mournful drawl:
"A single look more marks th' internal woe
"Than all the windings of the lengthen'd Oh.
"Up to the face the quick sensation flies,
"And darts its meaning from the speaking eyes:
"Love, transport, madness, anger, scorn, despair,
"And all the passions, all the soul is there."

I cannot conclude this Section without inserting another specimen of Lord CHESTERFIELD's happy method of pointing out faults, and of making the correction of them, as well as the attainment of excellence, "the business, the study, and the pleasure" of ingenuous youth. In one of those letters, from which I before made some useful extracts, he thus addresses the fond object of his paternal care and instructions:

"Your very bad enunciation, my son, gives me real concern; and I congratulate both you and myself, that I was informed of it (as I hope) in time to prevent it; and shall ever think myself, as hereafter you will, I am sure, think yourself, infinitely obliged to your friend, for informing me of it. If this ungraceful and disagreeable manner of speaking had, either by your negligence or mine, become habitual to you, as in a couple of years more it would have been, what a figure would you have made in company, or in a public assembly! Who would have liked you in the one, or have attended to you in the other?

"Read

"Read what CICERO and QUINTILIAN say of enunciation, and see what a stress they lay upon the gracefulness of it: nay, CICERO goes further, and even maintains, that a good figure is necessary for an orator; and particularly, that he must not be *vastus*, that is overgrown and clumsy. He shews by it, that he knew mankind well, and knew the powers of an agreeable figure and a graceful manner. Men are much oftener led by their hearts than by their understandings. The way to the heart is, through the senses: please their eyes and their ears, and the work is half done. I have frequently known a man's fortune decided for ever by his first address. If it is pleasing, people are hurried involuntarily into a persuasion, that he has a merit, which possibly he has not; as, on the other hand, if it is ungraceful, they are immediately prejudiced against him, and unwilling to allow him the merit which, it may be, he has. Nor is this sentiment so unjust and unreasonable, as at first it may seem; for, if a man has parts, he must know of how much consequence it is to him to have a graceful manner of speaking, and a genteel and pleasing address, and he will cultivate and improve them to the utmost. What is the constant and just observation, as to all actors upon the stage? Is it not, that those who have the best sense always speak the best, though they may happen not to have the best voices. They will speak plainly, distinctly, and with a proper emphasis, be their voices ever so bad. Had ROSCIUS spoken *quick*, *thick*, and *ungracefully*, I will answer for it that CICERO would not have thought him worth the oration which he made in his favor. Words were given us to communicate our ideas by; and there must be something inconceivably absurd, in uttering them in such a manner, as that either people cannot understand them, or will not desire to understand them. I tell you truly and sincerely, that

that I shall judge of your parts by your speaking gracefully or ungracefully. If you have parts, you will never be at reſt till you have brought yourself to a habit of speaking most gracefully; for I aver, that it is in your power. You will desire your tutor, that you may read aloud to him, every day; and that he will interrupt and correct you, every time that you read too fast, do not observe the proper stops, or lay a wrong emphasis. You will take care to open your teeth when you speak; to articulate every word distinctly; and to beg of any friend you speak to, to remind and stop you, if ever you fall into the rapid and unintelligible mutter. You will even read aloud to yourself, and tune your utterance to your own ear; and read at first much slower than you need to do, in order to correct that shameful habit of speaking faster than you ought. In short, you will make it your business, your study, and your pleasure, to speak well, if you think right. Therefore, what I have said, is more than sufficient, if you have sense; and ten times more would not be sufficient, if you have not: so here I reſt it."

# CHAP. III.

## OF LOGIC.

" How charming is divine philosophy!
" Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
" But musical as is APOLLO's lute." MILTON.

THERE is not any part of learning so little understood, and of course so much neglected, as the art of thinking, of judging, of reasoning, though the only foundation of all valuable knowledge. Such neglect must have been owing to the harsh, tedious, intricate method in which it has been taught, as well as to the frivolous and frequently pernicious purposes to which it has been applied. The general opinion entertained of its language is evident from a common phrase, in the mouth of almost every body, after hearing any thing which he did not understand, " It was all *logic* to me," that is to say, it was all unintelligible jargon; and indeed the prevalence of such an idea may be easily accounted for by whoever will take the trouble to read a few pages of the technical gibberish made use of by the followers, admirers, and interpreters of ARISTOTLE. One would almost suppose, that his treatise on this subject had been dictated by some evil Genius, to put a stop to the progress of the human understanding, and to divert it from useful pursuits to ostentatious and pedantic subtilties.

But though such a perverse method of teaching Logic rendered it at once the most difficult and the most use-

less of all attainments, we are not thence to conclude that the study is in its own nature either perplexing or unimportant. Let us take away the barbarous terms, the uncouth phrases, the numberless and puzzling intricacies in which it has been involved; let us bring it back from idle researches and from the fallacies of sophistry to its proper object and its end, the improvement of the mental powers, the discovery and communication of truth: in a word, let us confine our attention to the principles on which it is founded, and to the simplicity of the lessons arising out of them; and we shall soon be convinced, that no art or science is plainer or easier, and that its facility can only be equalled by the pleasure and advantage which it never fails to afford.

What then is Logic? I have already intimated that it is the art of thinking, of judging, of reasoning: it is the agreeable exercise of the mind in acquiring wisdom and knowledge with the greatest expedition and exactness: it inculcates and gradually brings on a habit of clearness and precision in our ideas, of accuracy in our judgments or opinions, and of fair and just inferences in our arguments: it not only precludes error in every thing that can be brought within the natural grasp of the underſtanding, but marks the true line between demonstration, or argumentative evidence, and probability. Though its rules seem wholly directed to the improvement and proper employment of our reason, yet it thereby regulates the exertions of our other faculties, and determines their real value. Without the aid of sound logic, the stores of the memory become mere lumber; the most brilliant fancy is a gay, sparkling, but delusive meteor; and the productions of genius itself are only amusing trifles.

But it may be said that what is here so highly praised and recommended as an art, must be the gift of Nature alone;

alone; that the reasoning faculty must be born with us; and that it is improvable solely by practice and experience, not by formal rules, or an idle parade of learning. The same argument might be urged with equal force against every branch of education, or against the theory of every art or science, in all which instruction will be of little service without natural capacity or talents, and these without the aid of instruction will often make an astonishing proficiency. The question however is not, how far unassisted nature may go in extraordinary cases, but whether a clear explanation of the principles of any art or science, and a course of practical exercises adapted to such theory, will not accelerate the progress of the mind in that pursuit, and conduct it not only sooner, but with greater ease and certainty, to the highest pitch of attainable perfection. Do we not know this to be the case in every other object of study; and can we suppose that the distinguishing faculty of man, his reason, is less susceptible of benefit from judicious precepts than any of his inferior endowments? May we not apply to the Understanding what AKENSIDE says of Taste, and what may be said of all faculties and accomplishments, that, though Heaven must sow the early seeds of future excellence,

"Yet, in vain,
"Without fair culture's kind parental aid,
"Without enliv'ning suns, and genial showers,
"And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope
"The tender plant can rear its blooming head,
"Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring."

It must be acknowledged, at the same time, that the power of reasoning correctly is of such importance on every occasion, and errors in judgment may often prove so fatal and inseparable, that kind Nature has left that faculty less dependent upon artificial education than any other.

other. She enters upon her own course of lessons almost at our birth. The love even of food does not long precede a manifest desire of information, and proper efforts to acquire it. The organs of sense begin to exert themselves; and it is remarkable that those, through the medium of which we acquire the greatest number and the most immediately useful of our ideas, are first called into play. The sight takes the lead, then the touch, next the hearing, and finally the taste and smell, these two being of the least service at an early age. Thus subjects for the exercise of thought are collected we may almost say in the cradle; images of external objects are impressed upon the mind; and infant reason, though under the influence of the senses, gives evident proofs of the commencement of its operations. As soon as the child begins to walk and to speak, he shews still greater eagerness to enlarge his stock of ideas. The young stranger wants to be made acquainted with every thing in the new world, into which he has been lately introduced; and that curiosity, the main spring of all knowledge, never quits him while he remains in it. Every step in his farther progress is marked by fome fresh acquisition, some perception of the difference between truth and error, between right and wrong, between wisdom and its opposite. He becomes in time a practical logician, without knowing any thing of the theory; and his natural good sense, assisted by experience, and by the habit of examining and comparing his own ideas, will commonly enable him to judge, to decide, to argue rationally on any point within the sphere of his comprehension.

In the present state of society, however, the regularity of this process cannot be always relied upon, or waited for; and fuch an untaught expertness in practical logic may come too late to be of any essential service. The aid of

of instruction ought therefore to be called in to co-operate with the designs of Nature, to abridge her course of training, and to put young people as soon as possible upon their guard againſt the deceptions of others, and the still more dangerous ſophistry of their own passions. But the early study of logic, though so obviously useful to every body, is of indispensable importance to the orator, whose grand aim is to convince his hearers; and who must also be qualified to detect and refute the fallacious arguments of his adversaries. He should have a clear and quick perception, says CICERO, of the force, the extension, and the different species of words, as they stand singly, or connected with sentences: he should likewise be acquainted with the various modes and forms, in which any concep tion of the mind may be expressed; with the methods of distinguishing a true proposition from a false one; with the different conclusions which result from different premises; with the true consequences and opposites to any given proposition; and, if an argument is embarrassed by ambiguities, he should know how to unravel each of them by an accurate distinction *. To these qualifications his attention will be directed in the study of logic.

After all, the great difficulty does not consist in proving that practical expertness in logic is a desirable or necessary accomplishment, but in pointing out an easy method by which it may be acquired. This is what I shall now attempt to do in a few remarks, ranged under three distinct heads, in conformity to the three principal functions or operations of the mind, thinking, judging, and reasoning.

* O ator ad Brutum.

SECT.

## SECT. I.

### OF THINKING.

THINKING or perception is that operation of the mind, by which it becomes acquainted with every idea or image impressed upon it by external objects, or arising from its own reflections. All our ideas are at firſt received through the medium of the senses, the sight, the hearing, the touch, the taste, the smell; and in their original state simple representations of the qualities of objects, as they happen to be big or little, round or square, black or white, loud or low, hard or ſoft, sweet or bitter, fetid or fragrant, &c. But these representations ſoon become blended, and from what are called complex ideas, made out of two or more simple ones, and attached to the objects of which they form the mental picture or image. Thus the child's rattle strikes his eye by its figure, and his ear by its sound, and makes upon the mind a complicated impression, embracing those two different ideas; to which are afterwards added ideas of its color, of the smoothness of its surface, and of the pleasure it affords, accompanied with a desire of enjoying that gratification. Here we perceive how soon our primary ideas not only mix with one another, but are associated also with a new set of ideas produced by the feelings and operations of the mind and will, which are as distinct and impressive as thoſe that we receive through the medium of the external senses.

As the ideas thus derived from various sources constitute the materials of all reasoning, it is of the utmost consequence to acquire very early the habit of increasing our

our stock, but at the same time taking care that our ideas be as clear as possible, free from obscurity or confusion, duly prepared for the exercise of our rational faculties, and of course for the discovery of truth and knowledge.

An attentive survey of Nature, and a careful perusal of the writings of those who have given us the best descriptions of her works, are the surest and most agreeable means of enriching the stores of the mind. In these first attempts, Logic does nothing more than enjoin a strict attention to perspicuity, precision, and methodical arrangement. The most essential quality of every thought or idea is that it should be clear: otherwise it cannot afford a striking image of the object which it is designed to represent. The picture must also be exact, neither more nor less than the original; and distinct, so as to mark its peculiarities, and keep it separate from other objects that surround it. Frequent and careful comparison can alone determine the accuracy of the resemblance.

With regard to the arrangement of ideas, they must be reduced to different classes, and have different names assigned them, in order to prevent the confusion that would otherwise arise from their number and variety. We should also attend to the like exactness in the choice of proper words to express each idea with the same clearness, precision, and force that it is conceived in the mind. Most of the controversies that take place in the world are owing to ignorance or negligence in this respect: they are more frequently disputes about words than about things; and a simple definition would often settle the difference.

All the points here lightly touched upon will be found discussed at full length in LOCKE's Essay on the human Understanding, to which inestimable work the attention of the

student

student must be directed as soon as his age, capacity, and some little previous instruction qualify him for the attempt.

But as many of my readers may smile at my recommending so much pains and labor in an Introduction to the art of thinking, I shall avail myself of the authority of an ingenious writer, Mr. MELMOTH, who has placed in a very just light the uncommonness of such an accomplishment, and the evils arising from the neglect of it. "There is not a more singular character in the world," he says, "than that of a thinking man. It is not merely having a succession of ideas, which lightly skim over the mind, that can with any propriety be styled by that denomination. It is observing them separately and distinctly; and ranging them under their respective classes: it is calmly and steadily viewing our opinions on every side, and resolutely tracing them through all their consequences and connections, that constitutes the man of reflection, and distinguishes reason from fancy. Providence, indeed, does not seem to have formed any very considerable number of our species for an extensive exercise of this higher faculty; as the thoughts of the far greater part of mankind are necessarily restrained within the ordinary purposes of animal life: but even if we look up to those who move in much superior orbits, and who have opportunities to improve, as well as leisure to exercise their understandings, we shall find that thinking is one of the last exerted privileges of cultivated humanity. It is, indeed, an operation of the mind which meets with many obstructions to check its just and free direction; but there are two principles, which prevail more or less in the constitutions of most men, that particularly contribute to keep this faculty of the soul unemployed; I mean pride and indolence. To descend to truth through the tedious progression of well-examined deductions, is considered

sidered as a reproach to the quickness of understanding; as it is by much too laborious a method for any but those who are possessed of a vigorous and resolute activity of mind. For this reason, the greater part of our species generally choose either to seize upon their conclusions at once, or to take them by rebound from others, as best suiting with their vanity or their laziness. Accordingly, Mr. LOCKE observes, that there are not so many errors and wrong opinions in the world as is generally imagined. Not that he thinks mankind are by any means uniform in embracing truth; but because the majority of them, he maintains, have no thought or opinion at all about those doctrines concerning which they raise the greatest clamor. Like the common soldiers in an army, they follow where their leaders direct, without knowing, or even inquiring into the cause for which they so warmly contend.

"This will account for the slow steps by which truth has advanced in the world on one side, and for those absurd systems which, at different periods, have had an universal currency on the other. For there is a strange disposition in human nature, either blindly to tread the same paths that have been traversed by others, or to strike out into the most devious extravagances: the greater part of the world will either totally renounce their reason, or reason only from the wild suggestions of an heated imagina-gination.

"From the same source may be derived those divisions and animosities which break the union both of public and private societies, and turn the peace and harmony of human intercourse into dissonance and contention; for while men judge and act by such measures as have not been proved by the standard of dispassionate reason, they must equally be mistaken in their estimates both of their own conduct and that of others."

SECT.

## SECT. II.

### OF JUDGING.

THE second operation of the mind is judging, by which it discovers the agreement or disagreement of any two ideas which it may have occasion to compare. Thus, for instance, having in my mind an image of the sun, and an idea of roundness, I compare, or bring both together, and discover their fitness. I then affirm, or say to myself, the sun is round; and the words, in which I express that affirmation, form a sentence, called by logicians, a *proposition*. If, upon comparing two ideas, I perceive their disagreement, as that the sun is not a square, nor a dark, nor a cold body, the sentence, which I then make use of, is called a negative proposition.

Every proposition, whether affirmative or negative, contains at least two ideas, besides the assertion of their agreement or disagreement. The first idea, be it simple or complex, is that of which something is affirmed or denied, and is called the *subject* of the proposition: the second idea is the property, or quality, or attribute, which is either affirmed or denied to belong to, or to agree with, the first idea, and is called the *predicate* of the proposition: the word expressive of the affirmation or denial is called the *copula*, or connective of the proposition.

When the two ideas, thus linked together, are immediately derived from the external senses, or from our bodily feelings, and are clearly conceived, we can entertain no doubt of the accuracy of our judgment, or of the truth of the proposition, if correctly expressed. We also rely with full confidence on the report of our mental feelings, or consciousness, as well as on our intuitive per-

ception

ception of a great number of what are called self-evident truths. To these we may add a fourth class of propositions, founded on the testimony of others, and on the information they afford respecting persons, places, or things, which we ourselves cannot examine. In many cases, such testimony is unquestionable; but, in others, the probabilities for and against the veracity or accurate knowledge of the reporter are so equally poised as to leave the mind in a state of suspense.

But from whatever source we derive the two ideas which we propose to compare, and upon the agreement or disagreement of which our judgment is to be exercised, we must take care that the mind, in performing this grand operation, be perfectly free from every thing which may obstruct the full and fair exertion of its powers, unbiassed by partiality or prejudice, unseduced by fallacious appearances in things, ambiguities in words, or any disposition to deceive or be deceived.

Mr. Barron, from whose Lectures on Logic some of these hints are taken, lays down the following three rules to direct our practice in forming just and useful judgments, and thereby preparing the best materials for the farther exercise of our reason, and for the increase or enlargement of our knowledge.

I. "Beware of precipitation, and never decide concerning the truth or falsehood of any proposition, till you well consider whether the words accurately express the ideas, whether you have distinct conceptions of the ideas, whether your minds are divested of prejudices, and whether you have fully canvassed the evidence.

II. "If, after employing every precaution, you still find information incomplete, or ideas not sufficiently clear, suspend your judgment till farther investigation or greater experience shall qualify you to decide.

III.

III. "Be satisfied with the evidence which the nature of a proposition admits."

For a complete illustration of these rules, I feel a pleasure in referring to the Lectures themselves, which will be found of great service to the young logician, and prepare him to read LOCKE, as before recommended, with the utmost advantage, and without any danger of being allured too far into the region of metaphysics.

## SECT. III.

### OF REASONING.

THIS is the third and last operation of the mind in the discovery of truth and knowledge; and it takes place when the agreement or disagreement of any two ideas does not immediately appear either upon intuition, or from the evidence of our bodily or mental feelings. In these cases, our judgment is suspended till we can find out some intermediate idea or train of ideas, bearing such a relation to each of the ideas to be compared as may enable us to decide on the truth or falsehood of what is affirmed or denied of them; and the process, by which we attain to this knowledge, is called reasoning. Thus, to prove that we should love virtue, or in order to be satisfied of the truth of the proposition, that virtue is amiable, I employ an intermediate idea, that of happiness, and if I find, upon comparing it with each of the two former, virtue and love, that they separately agree with it, I conclude that they agree with one another, and I reason thus:

We should love what makes us happy;
But virtue makes us happy;
Therefore we should love virtue.

This is what is termed a *syllogism* in regular form, consisting of three propositions, the first called the *major*, the second the *minor*, and the third the *conclusion*. But though all the old books of logic are filled with little more than figures, and forms, and pretended illustrations, but real confusions of this syllogistic mode of reasoning, we readily perceive that the mode itself is easy, and unerring, if we advance by regular and careful steps from the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, which we know, to that of any third idea, which may not be so obvious, yet capable of being compared with each of them, and of thus being made, as it were, an intermediate link in the chain. The length of the chain, or the number of links, if properly connected, can make no difference; and the demonstration that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, though requiring more details of proof, or more comparisons, is not ultimately less convincing than that the sum of three, four, and five, is equal to that of two sixes.

In reasoning, therefore, or in forming just arguments, and drawing proper conclusions, we have nothing more to do than to observe the caution already recommended in the exercise of our judgment, in comparing the ideas contained in each separate proposition, and then satisfying ourselves that the last inference is the just and necessary result of the agreement or disagreement discovered in those several comparisons. The manner, in which the mind proceeds through ever so long a train of intermediate ideas, without any doubt or perplexity, is thus pointed out by Mr. Barron:

"It must compare the first idea of the proposition with the first intermediate idea, and pass a judgment on their agreement or disagreement. It must next compare the first intermediate idea with the second intermediate idea,

and pass a similar judgment. It must proceed, in like manner, through all the intermediate ideas, and pass similar judgments, till it comes to compare the last intermediate idea with the latter idea of the proposition; and from all these intermediate judgments the conclusive judgment is deduced, concerning the agreement or disagreement of the two primary ideas of the proposition."

I am happily relieved from the necessity of entering into any details on the use or abuse of syllogisms, or on the means of guarding against fallacy in our own reasonings, and of detecting the fallacy or sophistry of others, as all these matters are very minutely discussed in the Lectures now quoted, and before recommended. It remains only for me to explain, what was not connected with the author's design in that work, the difference between logical and oratorical arguments.

Zeno, the famous founder of the sect of the Stoics, used to compare the logical argument to a clenched fist, and the oratorical argument to an open hand. This saying is more remarkable for the whimsicality of the comparison than for its truth. The syllogistic mode of reasoning is not more convincing and persuasive than the oratorical, and does not more effectually reduce our adversaries or opponents to the possibility of a reply. The Logician draws up his argument in regular form, his major, his minor, and his conclusion: the Orator lays aside all that formal stiffness; and, by inverting the order of the propositions, by frequently omitting one or other of them which may be easily supplied by the hearer, and by concealing all appearance of artifice or design, he renders his argument more irresistible, because it is less guarded against. He also enlarges upon every important point, in order to make the truth sink deeper into the mind, and

to flash conviction upon the dullest and darkest understanding. In one respect, indeed, a clenched fist may be deemed a just emblem of the logical argument, and an open hand of the oratorical, as the former is more compressed, and the latter more expanded; but though *knock-down* blows may be necessary to silence a very obstinate disputer, yet general persuasion can only be the result of less alarming appeals to the understanding and the passions.

By way of illustration, let us take our former example of a regular syllogism, and see how eloquence would exhibit the same truth, but with increased attractions:

We should love what makes us happy;
But virtue makes us happy;
Therefore we should love virtue.

In a work of taste, the order of these propositions would be inverted, and one of them left out. The Orator would begin with what here forms the conclusion, or the thing to be proved; and would bring the proof or the reason after. He would say, we should love virtue, because it makes us happy. But not contented with this change, he would give to what he selected from the Logician's argument, a much more captivating form. Is it possible, he would ask, not to be struck with the loveliness of virtue, which constitutes the distinguishing excellence of man, and is the chief source of his happiness? Even if he thought it necessary to retain all the three propositions, he would arrange them in a different order, yet so as to heighten their effect; and would not only give greater force and extent to every proposition, but would also place it in the most advantageous point of view. I do not just now recollect any piece of composition, in which the art of the acute logician is more happily concealed under bold strokes of oratory than in HARRIS's beautiful

panegyric on virtue, with which I shall conclude the present Chapter:

"I find myself existing upon a little spot, surrounded every way by an immense unknown expansion.—Where am I? What sort of place do I inhabit?—Is it exactly accommodated, in every instance, to my convenience? Is there no excess of cold, none of heat, to offend me? Am I never annoyed by animals either of my own kind, or a different? Is every thing subservient to me, as though I had ordered all myself?—No.—Nothing like it—the farthest from it possible.—The world appears not then originally made for the private convenience of me alone?—It does not.—

"But is it not possible so to accommodate it, by my own particular industry?—If to accommodate man and beast, heaven and earth; if this be beyond me, 'tis not possible.—What consequence then follows? Or can there be any other than this—If I seek an interest of my own, detached from that of others; I seek an interest which is chimerical and can never have existence. How then must I determine? have I no interest at all?—If I have not, I am a fool for staying here. 'Tis a smoaky house, and the sooner out of it the better.—But why no interest?—Can I be contented with none, but one separate and detached?—Is a social interest joined with others such an absurdity, as not to be admitted? The bee, the beaver, and the tribes of herding animals, are enough to convince me, that the thing is, somewhere at least, possible. How then am I assured, that 'tis not equally true of man!—Admit it; and what follows?—If so, then honor and justice are my interest—then the whole train of moral virtues are my interest; without some portion of which, not even thieves can maintain society.

"But

" But farther still—I stop not here—I pursue this social interest, as far as I can trace my several relations. I pass from my own flock, my own neighbourhood, my own nation, to the whole race of mankind, as dispersed throughout the earth.—Am I not related to them all, by the mutual aids of commerce; by the general intercourse of arts and letters; by that common nature, of which we all participate?—Again—I must have food and clothing.—Without a proper genial warmth, I instantly perish.—Am I not related in this view to the very earth itself? To the distant sun from whose beams I derive vigour? To that stupendous course and order of the infinite host of heaven, by which the times and seasons ever uniformly pass on?—Were this order once confounded, I could not probably survive a moment; so absolutely do I depend on this common general welfare?

" What then have I to do, but to enlarge virtue into piety? Not only honor and justice, and what I owe to man, is my interest; but gratitude also, acquiescence, resignation, adoration, and all I owe to this great polity, and its greater governor, our common Parent.

" But if all these moral and divine habits be my interest, I need not surely seek for a better. I have an interest compatible with the spot on which I live—I have an interest which may exist, without altering the plan of Providence, without mending or marring the general order of events.—I can bear whatever happens with warlike magnanimity; can be contented; and fully happy in the good which I possess; and can pass through this turbid, this fickle, fleeting period, without bewailings, or envyings, or murmurings, or complaints."

THE

# BRITISH CICERO.

## PART THE FIRST.

### SPECIMENS OF POPULAR ELOQUENCE.

TO the general rules of persuasion already laid down it may be proper to add, for the guidance of the young Orator, a few hints respecting the perspicuity and diffuseness, when he has to speak before a large body or numerous meeting of the people. He cannot want to be told that perspicuity of style is the most essential requisite, as without it the very purpose of speech would be defeated. But though the first object, upon all occasions, is to convey our ideas clearly and fully to the minds of others, yet the importance, or rather the necessity of doing so is increased, when we are addressing a popular assembly, and have no right to expect that our hearers will give themselves any trouble to guess at our confused meaning, or that all of them have quickness and sagacity enough to catch at every little glimpse in the general obscurity of a long harangue. We must therefore, in such cases, take especial care not only that every hearer may understand us, but that it shall be impossible for him not to understand us;—that our meaning may strike the dullest or the most careless;—that, to borrow the simile of

QUINTILIAN, the perspicuity of our language may rush upon the mind, as the light of the sun does upon the eye, even when not directed towards it.

I would not have the young Orator, however, underrate too much the intellect or capacity of his audience, and thence deem it neceffary to enter into tiresome details and frivolous illuftrations. He is allowed to be more diffuse in an assembly of the people than in either house of parliament, or in courts of law; but his copiousness must not proceed to redundancy, and he must not forget in the ardor of amplification that too much is more offensive than too little. I am not now speaking of those noisy and conceited babblers, who seem to mistake loquaciousness for eloquence, and to consider volubility of tongue and intrepidity of face as the only requisite in a public speaker—I am for restraining the luxuriance even of real genius, and for subjecting the vehemence of passion itself to the controul of reason. The popular speaker will sometimes spread out his matter, but always in order to exhibit a more distinct and more comprehensive view of the subject, or to present an important truth in a variety of the most striking lights. He will never stoop to a vulgar strain; but he knows that the true sublime is perfectly compatible with simplicity. His ideas and sentiments seem to arise out of each other, and to follow in so clear and natural an order, as very much contributes to increase the strength as well as luftre of the whole; and all his words, though uttered with the greateft fluency, shew his happy choice and masterly command of the plainest, yet strongest expressions in the language.

General Elections are the grand scenes for the display and exertion of popular oratory; and it would be easy to fill many volumes with a collection of speeches delivered on such occasions. But very few of them can be selected

as models of eloquence, as they commonly breathe too much of the spirit of rivalship, jealousy, animosity, and party. The following are among the leaſt exceptionable on this account.

# THE LATE MR. BURKE's SPEECHES
## TO THE
## ELECTORS OF BRISTOL,
## IN 1774.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

AT the dissolution of Parliament on the last day of September 1774, Mr. BURKE, who had hitherto represented Wendover, went down to Malton, one of the Yorkshire boroughs under the influence of the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM, at whose desire he was chosen without hesitation. But, in the mean time, a very respectable party of dissenters, merchants, and freemen of Bristol, who highly approved of his late exertions in favor both of civil and religious liberty, put him in nomination for their city; and some of them set off express for London, and thence for Malton to request his concurrence. They arrived at the latter place just after his election; but their offer was so flattering, that, with the consent of his new constituents, he immediately repaired to Bristol. Three candidates had already started, Lord CLARE, one of the late representatives, who declined on the second day of the poll; Mr. BRICKDALE, his lordship's colleague, but neither quite so unpopular, nor so obnoxious; and Mr. CRUGER, an American merchant, who from interest and principle

principle was averse to any rupture between the colonies and the mother-country. Mr. BURKE appeared on the hustings at the Guildhall, Bristol, in the afternoon of the sixth day's poll [October 13] and thus addressed the Electors,

"GENTLEMEN,

"I am come hither, to solicit in person that favor, which my friends have hitherto endeavoured to procure for me, by the most obliging, and to me the moft honorable exertions.

"I have so high an opinion of the great truft which you have to confer on this occasion, and, by long experience, so just a diffidence in my abilities to fill it in a manner adequate even to my own ideas, that I should never have ventured of myself to intrude into that awful situation. But since I am called upon by the desire of feveral respectable fellow-subjects, as I have done at other times, I give up my fears to their wishes. Whatever my other deficiencies may be, I do not know what it is to be wanting to my friends.

"I am not fond of attempting to raise public expectations by great promises. At this time, there is much cause to consider, and very little to presume. We seem to be approaching to a great crisis in our affairs, which calls for the whole wisdom of the wisest among us, without being able to assure ourselves, that any wisdom can preserve us from many and great inconveniencies. You know I speak of our unhappy contest with America. I confess, it is a matter on which I look down as from a precipice. It is difficult in itself, and it is rendered more intricate by a great variety of plans of conduct. I do not mean to enter into them. I will not suspect a want of good intention in framing them. But however pure the intentions of their authors may have been, we all know that

the

the event has been unfortunate. The means of recovering our affairs are not obvious. So many great questions of commerce, of finance, of constitution, and of policy, are involved in this American deliberation, that I dare engage for nothing, but that I shall give it, without any predilection to former opinions, or any sinister bias whatsoever, the most honest and impartial consideration of which I am capable. The public has a full right to it; and this great city, a main pillar in the commercial intereſt of Great Britain, muſt totter on its base by the slighteſt mistake with regard to our American measures.

"Thus much, however, I think not amiss to lay before you; That I am not, I hope, apt to take up or lay down my opinions lightly. I have held, and ever shall maintain to the best of my power, unimpaired and undiminished the just, wise, and necessary constitutional superiority of Great Britain. This is necessary for America, as well as for us. I never mean to depart from it. Whatever may be lost by it, I avow it. The forfeiture even of your favor, if by such a declaration I could forfeit it, though the first object of my ambition, never will make me disguise my sentiments on this subject.

"But,—I have ever had a clear opinion, and have ever held a constant corresponding conduct, that this superiority is consistent with all the liberties a sober and spirited American ought to desire. I never mean to put any colonist, or any human creature in a situation, not becoming a free-man. To reconcile British superiority with American liberty, shall be my great object, as far as my little faculties extend. I am far from thinking that both, even yet, may not be preserved.

"When I first devoted myself to the public service, I considered how I should render myself fit for it; and this I did by endeavouring to discover what it was that gave this country

country the rank it holds in the world. I found that our prosperity and dignity arose principally, if not solely from two sources, our constitution and commerce. Both these I have spared no study to understand, and no endeavour to support.

"The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a member of the House of Commons. But the liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order; that not only exists with order and virtue, but which cannot exist at all without them. It inheres in good and steady government, as in its substance and vital principle.

"The other source of our power is commerce, of which you are so large a part, and which cannot exist, no more than your liberty, without a connection with many virtues. It has ever been a very particular and a very favorite object of my study, in its principles, and in its details. I think many here are acquainted with the truth of what I say. This I know, that I have ever had my house open, and my poor services ready, for traders and manufacturers of every denomination. My favorite ambition is to have those services acknowledged. I now appear before you to make trial, whether my earnest endeavours have been so wholly oppressed by the weakness of my abilities, as to be rendered insignificant in the eyes of a great trading city; or whether you chuse to give a weight to humble abilities, for the sake of the honest exertions with which they are accompanied. This is my trial to-day. My industry is not on trial. Of my industry I am sure, as far as my constitution of mind and body admitted.

"When I was invited by many respectable merchants, freeholders, and freemen of this city, to offer them my services,

services, I had just received the honor of an election at another place, at a very great distance from this. I immediately opened the matter to those of my worthy constituents who were with me; and they unanimously advised me not to decline it. They told me that they had elected me with a view to the public service; and, as great questions relative to our commerce and colonies were imminent, that in such matters I might derive authority and support from the representation of this great commercial city: they desired me therefore to set off without delay, very well persuaded that I never could forget my obligations to them, or to my friends, for the choice they had made of me. From that time to this instant I have not slept *; and if I should have the honour of being freely chosen by you, I hope I shall be as far from slumbering or sleeping when your service requires me to be awake, as I have been in coming to offer myself a candidate for your favor."

This speech was received with great applause; and, after a sharp contest, Mr. BURKE had the pleasure, on that day three weeks [November 3.] to be declared by the Sheriffs duly elected, in conjunction with Mr. CRUGER, the other popular candidate, who, either overpowered by his feelings, or depressed by a just consciousness of his oratorical inferiority to his colleague, was scarcely able in the simplest and shortest form to thank the electors. But that very confusion or inability furnished Mr. BURKE with matter for the ingenious, liberal, modest, and conciliating exordium of the following eloquent harangue:

* Mr. BURKE had set off from Malton on the preceding Tuesday at six in the evening, and arrived at Bristol on Thursday at half past two in the afternoon, having in the intermediate time travelled almost three hundred and forty miles.

" GENTLE-

"GENTLEMEN,

"I cannot avoid sympathizing strongly with the feelings of the gentleman who has received the same honor that you have conferred on me. If he, who was bred and passed his whole life amongst you; if he, who through the easy gradations of acquaintance, friendship, and esteem, has obtained the honor, which seems of itself, naturally and almost insensibly, to meet with those, who, by the even tenor of pleasing manners and social virtues, slide into the love and confidence of their fellow-citizens;—if he cannot speak but with great emotion on this subject, surrounded as he is on all sides with his old friends; you will have the goodness to excuse me, if my real, unaffected embarrassment prevents me from expressing my gratitude to you as I ought.

"I was brought thither under the disadvantage of being unknown, even by sight, to any of you. No previous canvass was made for me. I was put in nomination after the poll was opened. I did not appear until it was far advanced. If, under all these accumulated disadvantages, your good opinion has carried me to this happy point of success, you will pardon me, if I can only say to you collectively, as I have said to you individually, simply and plainly, I thank you—I am obliged to you—I am not insensible of your kindness.

"This is all that I am able to say for the inestimable favor you have conferred upon me. But I cannot be satisfied, without saying a little more in defence of the right you have to confer such a favor. The person who appeared here as counsel for the candidate, who so long and so earnestly solicited your votes, thinks proper to deny, that a very great part of you have any votes to give. He fixes a standard period of time in his own imagination, not what the law defines, but merely what the convenience of his client suggests, by which he would cut off, at

at one stroke, all those freedoms, which are the dearest privileges of your corporation; which the common law authorizes; which your magistrates are compelled to grant; which come duly authenticated into this court; and are saved in the clearest words, and with the most religious care and tenderness, in that very act of parliament, which was made to regulate the elections by freemen, and to prevent all possible abuses in making them.

"I do not intend to argue the matter here. My learned counsel has supported your cause with his usual ability; the worthy sheriffs have acted with their usual equity; and I have no doubt, that the same equity, which dictates the return, will guide the final determination. I had the honor, in conjunction with many far wiser men, to contribute a very small assistance, but however some assistance, to the forming the judicature which is to try such questions. It would be unnatural in me to doubt the justice of that court, in the trial of my own cause, to which I have been so active to give jurisdiction in every other.

"I assure the worthy freemen, and this corporation, that, if the gentleman perseveres in the intentions which his present warmth dictates to him, I will attend their cause with diligence, and I hope with effect. For, if I know any thing of myself, it is not my own interest in it, but my full conviction that induces me to tell you,—*I think there is not a shadow of doubt in the case.*

"I do not imagine that you find me rash in declaring myself, or very forward in troubling you. From the beginning to the end of the election, I have kept silence in all matters of discussion. I have never asked a question of a voter on the other side, or supported a doubtful vote on my own. I respected the abilities of my managers: I relied

relied on the candor of the court. I think the worthy sheriffs will bear me witness, that I never once made an attempt to impose upon their reason, to surprise their justice, or to ruffle their temper. I stood on the hustings (except when I gave my thanks to those who favored me with their votes), less like a candidate, than an unconcerned spectator of a public proceeding. But here the face of things is altered. Here is an attempt for a general *massacre* of suffrages; an attempt, by a *promiscuous carnage* of *friends* and *foes*, to exterminate above two thousand votes, including *seven hundred polled for the gentleman himself, who now complains*, and who would destroy the friends whom he has obtained, only because he cannot obtain as many of them as he wishes.

"How he will be permitted, in another place, to stultify and disable himself, and to plead against his own acts, is another question. The law will decide it. I shall only speak of it as it concerns the propriety of public conduct in this city. I do not pretend to lay down rules of decorum for other gentlemen. They are best judges of the mode of proceeding that will recommend them to the favor of their fellow-citizens. But I confess, I should look rather awkward, if I had been the *very first to produce the new copies of freedom*; if I had persisted in producing them to the last; if I had ransacked, with the most unremitting industry, and the most penetrating research, the remotest corners of the kingdom to discover them; if I were then, all at once, to turn short, and declare, that I had been sporting all this while with the right of election, and that I had been drawing out a poll, upon no sort of rational grounds, which disturbed the peace of my fellow-citizens for a month together—I really, for my part, should appear awkward under such circumstances.

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"It would be still more awkward in me, if I were gravely to look the sheriffs in the face, and to tell them, they were not to determine my cause on my own principles; nor to make the return upon those votes, upon which I had rested my election. Such would be my appearance to the court and magistrates.

"But how should I appear to the *voters* themselves? if I had gone round to the citizens entitled to freedom, and squeezed them by the hand,—"Sir, I humbly beg "your vote—I shall be eternally thankful—May I hope "for the honor of your support?—Well! come—we shall "see you at the council-house." If I were then to deliver them to my managers, pack them into tallies, vote them off in court, and when I heard from the bar—"Such "a one only, and such a one for ever!—he's my man!"—"Thank you, good Sir—Hah! my worthy friend! thank "you kindly—that's an honest fellow—how is your good "family?"—Whilst these words were hardly out of my mouth, if I should have wheeled round at once, and told them,—"Get you gone, you pack of worthless fellows! "you have no votes—you are usurpers! you are intruders "on the rights of real freemen! I will have nothing to "do with you! you ought never to have been produced "at this election, and the sheriffs ought not to have ad- "mitted you to poll."

"Gentlemen, I should make a strange figure, if my conduct had been of this sort. I am not so old an acquaintance of yours as the worthy gentleman. Indeed I could not have ventured on such kind of freedoms with you. But I am bound, and I will endeavour, to have justice done to the rights of freemen; even though I should, at the same time, be obliged to vindicate the former part of

of my antagonist's conduct against his own present inclinations *.

" I owe myself, in all things, to *all* the freemen of this city. My particular friends have a demand on me, that I should not deceive their expectation. Never was cause or man supported with more constancy, more activity, more spirit. I have been supported with a zeal indeed and heartiness in my friends, which (if their object had been at all proportioned to their endeavours) could never be sufficiently commended. They supported me upon the most liberal principles. They wished that the members for Bristol should be chosen for the city, and for the country at large, and not for themselves.

" So far they are not disappointed. If I possess nothing else, I am sure I possess the temper that is fit for your service. I know nothing of Bristol, but by the favors I have received, and the virtues I have seen exerted in it.

" I shall ever retain, what I now feel, the most perfect and grateful attachment to my friends; and I have no enmities—no resentment. I never can consider fidelity to engagements, and constancy in friendships, but with the highest approbation; even when those noble qualities are employed against my own pretensions. The gentleman, who is not fortunate as I have been in this contest, enjoys, in this respect, a consolation full of honor both to himself and to his friends. They have certainly left nothing undone for his service.

* All these remarks, though made in a strain of the greatest pleasantry and good humor, are very pointed at the inconsistency of Mr. BRICKDALE, who had opened his poll with a tally of freemen of the description here alluded to, and had voted many hundreds of them, though he afterwards disclaimed the validity of their title.

" As

"As for the trifling petulance, which the rage of party stirs up in little minds, though it should shew itself even in this court, it has not made the slightest impression on me. The highest flight of such clamorous birds is winged in an inferior region of the air. We hear them, and we look upon them, just as you, gentlemen, when you enjoy your serene air on your lofty rocks, look down upon the gulls, that skim the mud off your river, when it is exhausted of its tide.

"I am sorry I cannot conclude, without saying a word on a topic touched upon by my worthy colleague. I wish that topic had been passed by, at a time when I have so little leisure to discuss it. But since he has thought proper to throw it out, I owe you a clear explanation of my poor sentiments on that subject.

"He tells you, "that the topic of instructions has occasioned much altercation and uneasiness in this city;" and he expresses himself (if I understand him rightly) in favor of the coërcive authority of such instructions.

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their opinion high respect; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and, above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But, his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure—no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you, not his indus-

try only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

"My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent. If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours, without question, ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and, what sort of reason is that, in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate, and another decide; and where those, who from the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

"To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions, *mandates* issued, which the member is bound blindly, and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience, these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

"Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against the other agents and advocates; but parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation, with *one* interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You chuse a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of *parliament*. If the local constituent should

have

have an interest, or should form a hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far, as any other, from any endeavour to give it effect. I beg pardon for saying so much on this subject. I have been unwillingly drawn into it; but I shall ever use a respectful frankness of communication with you. Your faithful friend, your devoted servant, I shall be to the end of my life: a flatterer you do not wish for. On this point of instructions, however, I think it scarcely possible we ever can have any sort of difference. Perhaps I may give you too much, rather than too little trouble.

"From the first hour I was encouraged to court your favor to this happy day of obtaining it, I have never promised you any thing, but humble and persevering endeavours to do my duty. The weight of that duty, I confess, makes me tremble; and whoever well considers what it is, of all things in the world will fly from what has the least likeness to a positive and precipitate engagement. To be a good member of parliament is, let me tell you, no easy task, especially at this time, when there is so strong a disposition to run into the perilous extremes of servile compliance or wild popularity. To unite circumspection with vigor is absolutely necessary; but it is extremely difficult. We are now members for a rich commercial *city*: this city, however, is but a part of a rich commercial *nation*, the interests of which are various, multiform, and intricate. We are members for that great nation, which however is itself but part of a great *empire*, extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the east and of the west. All these wide-spread interests must be considered; must be compared; must be reconciled if possible. We are members for a *free* country; and surely we all know, that the machine of a free constitution is no simple

thing; but as intricate, and as delicate, as it is valuable. We are members in a great and ancient *monarchy*; and we must preserve religiously the true legal rights of the sovereign, which form the key-stone that binds together the noble and well-constructed arch of our empire and our constitution. A constitution made up of balanced powers must ever be a critical thing. As such I mean to touch that part of it which comes within my reach. I know my inability, and I wish for support from every quarter. In particular I shall aim at the friendship, and shall cultivate the best correspondence, of the worthy colleague you have given me.

"I trouble you no farther than once more to thank you all; you, gentlemen, for your favors; the candidates, for their temperate and polite behaviour; and the sheriffs for a conduct which may give a model for all who are in public stations."

## Mr. BURKE'S SPEECHES

### TO THE

### ELECTORS OF BRISTOL

### IN 1780.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

In the course of Mr. Burke's parliamentary exertions for the six years that he represented Bristol, he had the misfortune to shock in many instances the political and commercial, as well as the religious prejudices of his constituents, particularly by his support of certain resolutions favorable to the trade of Ireland; by his mode of proceed-

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ing on Lord BEAUCHAMP's bill for reforming the law process concerning imprisonment; and by his votes on the popery acts. It is probable that his written and printed defences of those measures would have softened the asperity of some of the prejudices; but the frantic tumults about popery, in the year 1780, kindled a blaze which it was not in the power of his eloquence to extinguish. A proclamation for dissolving the parliament, and for calling a new one, having been issued on the first of September, Mr. BURKE repaired to Bristol with all possible dispatch; but previously to his making any trial of his strength against three candidates who had started before him, he entered into the following justification of his public conduct in a speech addressed to a numerous meeting of the freemen, convened by the Mayor at the Guildhall on the sixth of September:

"MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,

"I am extremely pleased at the appearance of this large and respectable meeting. The steps I may be obliged to take will want the sanction of a considerable authority; and in explaining any thing which may appear doubtful in my public conduct, I must naturally desire a very full audience.

"I have been backward to begin my canvass.—The dissolution of the parliament was uncertain; and it did not become me, by an unseasonable importunity, to appear diffident of the fact of my six years' endeavour to please you. I had served the city of Bristol honorably; and the city of Bristol had no reason to think, that the means of honorable service to the public were become indifferent to me.

"I found, on my arrival here, that three gentlemen had been long in eager pursuit of an object, which but

two of us can obtain. I found, that they had all met with encouragement. A contested election in such a city as this is no light thing. I paused on the brink of the precipice. These three gentlemen, by various merits, and on various titles, I made no doubt were worthy of your favor. I shall never attempt to raise myself by depreciating the merits of my competitors. In the complexity and confusion of these cross pursuits, I wished to take the authentic public sense of my friends upon a business of so much delicacy. I wished to take your opinion along with me; that if I should give up the contest at the very beginning, my surrender of my post may not seem the effect of inconstancy, or timidity, or anger, or disgust, or indolence, or any other temper unbecoming a man who has engaged in the public service. If, on the contrary, I should undertake the election, and fail of success, I was full as anxious, that it should be manifest to the whole world, that the peace of the city had not been broken by my rashness, presumption, or fond conceit of my own merit.

"I am not come by a false and counterfeit shew of deference to your judgment, to seduce it in my favor. I ask it seriously and unaffectedly. If you wish that I should retire I shall not consider that advice as a censure upon my conduct, or an alteration in your sentiments; but as a rational submission to the circumstances of affairs. If, on the contrary, you should think it proper for me to proceed on my canvass, if you will risk the trouble on your part, I will risk it on mine. My pretensions are such as you cannot be ashamed of, whether they succeed or fail.

"If you call upon me, I shall solicit the favor of the city upon manly ground. I come before you with the plain confidence of an honest servant in the equity of a candid and discerning master. I come to claim your ap-

 probation,

probation, not to amuse you with vain apologies, or with professions still more vain and senseless. I have lived too long to be served by apologies or to stand in need of them. The part I have acted has been in open day; and to hold out to a conduct, which stands in that clear and steady light for all its good and all its evil, to hold out to that conduct the paltry winking tapers of excuses and promises.—I never will do it. They may obscure it with their smoke; but they never can illumine sunshine by such a flame as theirs.

"I am sensible that no endeavours have been left untried to injure me in your opinion. But the use of character is to be a shield against calumny. I could wish undoubtedly, (if idle wishes were not the most idle of all things,) to make every part of my conduct agreeable to every one of my constituents. But in so great a city, and so greatly divided as this, it is weak to expect it.

"In such a discordancy of sentiments, it is better to look to the nature of things than to the humors of men. The very attempt towards pleasing every body discovers a temper always flashy, and often false, and insincere. Therefore, as I have proceeded strait onward in my conduct, so I will proceed in my account of those parts of it which have been most excepted to. But I must first beg leave just to hint to you, that we may suffer very great detriment by being open to every talker. It is not to be imagined, how much of service is lost from spirits full of activity, and full of energy, who are pressing, who are rushing forward, to great and capital objects, when you oblige them to be continually looking back. Whilst they are defending one service, they defraud you of an hundred. Applaud us when we run; console us when we fall; cheer us when we recover; but let us pass on—for God's sake, let us pass on.

"Do

"Do you think, gentlemen, that every public act in the six years since I stood in this place before you—that all the arduous things which have been done in this eventful period, which has crowded into a few years' space the revolutions of an age, can be opened to you on their fair grounds in half an hour's conversation?

"But it is no reason, because there is a bad mode of inquiry, that there should be no examination at all. Most certainly it is our duty to examine; it is our interest too;—but it must be with discretion; with an attention to all the circumstances, and all the motives; like sound judges, and not like cavilling pettifoggers and quibbling pleaders, prying into flaws and hunting for exceptions.—Look, gentlemen, to the whole tenor of your member's conduct. Try whether his ambition or his avarice have justled him out of the strait line of duty; or whether that grand foe of the offices of active life, that master-vice in men of business, a degenerate and inglorious sloth, has made him flag and languish in his course? This is the object of our inquiry. If our member's conduct can bear this touch, mark it for sterling. He may have fallen into errors; he must have faults; but our error is greater, and our fault is radically ruinous to ourselves, if we do not bear, if we do not even applaud, the whole compound and mixed mass of such a character. Not to act thus is folly—I had almost said it is impiety. He censures God, who quarrels with the imperfections of man.

"Gentlemen, we must not be peevish with those who serve the people. For none will serve us whilst there is a court to serve, but those who are of a nice and jealous honor. They who think every thing, in comparison of that honor, to be dust and ashes, will not bear to have it soiled and impaired by those, for whose sake they make

a thousand

a thousand sacrifices to preserve it immaculate and whole. We shall either drive such men from the public stage, or we shall send them to the court for protection; where, if they must sacrifice their reputation, they will at least secure their interest. Depend upon it, that the lovers of freedom will be free. None will violate their conscience to please us, in order afterwards to discharge that conscience, which they have violated, by doing us faithful and affectionate service. If we degrade and deprave their minds by servility, it will be absurd to expect, that they who are creeping and abject towards us, will ever be bold and incorruptible assertors of our freedom, against the most seducing and the most formidable of all powers. No! human nature is not so formed, nor shall we improve the faculties, or better the morals of public men, by our possession of the most infallible receipt in the world for making cheats and hypocrites.

"Let me say with plainness, I who am no longer in a public character, that if by a fair, by an indulgent, by a gentlemanly behaviour to our representatives, we do not give confidence to their minds, and a liberal scope to their understandings; if we do not permit our members to act upon a *very* enlarged view of things; we shall at length infallibly degrade our national representation into a confused and scuffling bustle of local agency. When the popular member is narrowed in his ideas, and rendered timid in his proceedings, the service of the crown will be the sole nursery of statesmen. Among the frolics of the court it may at length take that of attending to its business. Then the monopoly of mental power will be added to the power of all other kinds it possesses. On the side of the people there will be nothing but impotence: for ignorance is impotence; narrowness of mind is impotence; timidity is itself impotence, and makes all other

other qualities that go along with it, impotent and useless.

"At present it is the plan of the court to make its servants insignificant. If the people should fall into the same humor, and should choose their servants on the same principles of mere obsequiousness, and flexibility, and total vacancy or indifference of opinion in all public matters, then no part of the state will be sound; and it will be in vain to think of saving it.

"I thought it very expedient at this time to give you this candid counsel, and with this counsel I would willingly close, if the matters, which at various times have been objected to me in this city, concerned only myself, and my own election. These charges, I think, are four in number;—my neglect of a due attention to my constituents, the not paying more frequent visits here;—my conduct on the affairs of the first Irish trade acts;—my opinion and mode of proceeding on Lord BEAUCHAMP's debtors bill;—and my votes on the late affairs of the Roman catholics. All of these, (except perhaps the first) relate to matters of very considerable public concern; and it is not lest you should censure me improperly, but lest you should form improper opinions on matters of some moment to you, that I trouble you at all upon the subject. My conduct is of small importance.

"With regard to the first charge, my friends have spoken to me of it in the style of amicable expostulation; not so much blaming the thing, as lamenting the effects.—Others, less partial to me, were less kind in assigning the motives. I admit, there is a decorum and propriety in a member of parliament's paying a respectful court to his constituents. If I were conscious to myself that pleasure or dissipation, or low unworthy occupations, had detained me from personal attendance on you, I would readily

dily admit my fault, and quietly submit to the penalty. But, gentlemen, I live at an hundred miles' distance from Bristol; and at the end of the session I come to my own house, fatigued in body and in mind, to a little repose, and to a very little attention to my family and my private concerns. A visit to Bristol is always a sort of canvass; else it will do more harm than good. To pass from the toils of a session to the toils of a canvass is the furthest thing in the world from repose. I could hardly serve you *as I have done*, and court you too. Most of you have heard, that I do not remarkably spare myself in *public* business; and in the *private* business of my constituents, I have done very near as much as those who have nothing else to do. My canvass of you was not on the 'Change, nor in the county meetings, nor in the clubs of this city; it was in the House of Commons; it was at the custom-house; it was at the council; it was at the treasury; it was at the admiralty. I canvassed you through your affairs, and not your persons. I was not only your representative as a body; I was the agent, the solicitor of individuals; I ran about wherever your affairs could call me; and in acting for you I often appeared rather as a ship-broker, than as a member of parliament. There was nothing too laborious, or too low for me to undertake. The meanness of the business was raised by the dignity of the object. If some lesser matters have slipped through my fingers, it was because I filled my hands too full; and in my eagerness to serve you, took in more than any hands could grasp. Several gentlemen stand round me who are my willing witnesses; and there are others who, if they were here, would be still better, because they would be unwilling witnesses to the same truth. It was in the middle of a summer residence in London, and in the middle of a negociation at the admiralty for your trade, that I was called

called to Bristol; and this late visit, at this day, has been possibly in prejudice to your affairs.

"Since I have touched upon this matter, let me say, gentlemen, that if I had a disposition, or a right to complain, I have some cause of complaint on my side. With a petition of this city in my hand, passed through the corporation without a dissenting voice, a petition in unison with almoſt the whole voice of the kingdom (with whoſe formal thanks I was covered over) while I laboured on no less than five bills for a public reform, and fought against the opposition of great abilities, and of the greatest power, every clause, and every word of the largest of those bills almost to the very laſt day of a very long session; all this time a canvass in Bristol was as calmly carried on as if I were dead. I was considered as a man wholly out of the question. Whilst I watched, and fasted, and sweated in the House of Commons—by the most easy and ordinary arts of election, by dinners and visits, by 'How do you do's,' and 'my worthy friends,' I was to be quietly moved out of my seat—and promises were made, and engagements entered into, without any exception or reserve, as if my laborious zeal in my duty had been a regular abdication of my trust.

"To open my whole heart to you on this subject, I do confess, however, that there were other times, besides the two years in which I did visit you, when I was not wholly without leisure for repeating that mark of my respect. But I could not bring my mind to see you. You remember, that in the beginning of this American war (that æra of calamity, disgrace, and downfal, an æra which no feeling mind will ever mention without a tear for England) you were greatly divided; and a very ſtrong body, if not the ſtrongest, opposed itself to the madness which every art and every power were employed to

render popular, in order that the errors of the rulers might be lost in the general blindness of the nation. This opposition continued till after our great, but most unfortunate victory at Long Island. Then all the mounds and banks of our constancy were borne down at once; and the phrensy of the American war broke in upon us like a deluge. This victory, which seemed to put an immediate end to all difficulties, perfected us in that spirit of domination, which our unparalleled prosperity had but too long nurtured. We had been so very powerful, and so very prosperous, that even the humblest of us were degraded into the vices and follies of kings. We lost all measure between means and ends; and our headlong desires became our politics and our morals. All men who wished for peace, or retained any sentiments of moderation, were overborne or silenced; and this city was led by every artifice (and probably with the more management, because I was one of your members) to diſtinguish itself by its zeal for that fatal cause. In this temper of yours and of my mind, I should have sooner fled to the extremities of the earth, than have shewn myself here. I, who saw in every American victory (for you have had a long series of these misfortunes) the germ and seed of the naval power of France and Spain, which all our heat and warmth against America was only hatching into life, —I should not have been a welcome visitant with the brow and the language of such feelings. When afterwards, the other face of your calamity was turned upon you, and shewed itself in defeat and distress, I shunned you full as much. I felt ſurely this variety in our wretchedness; and I did not wiſh to have the least appearance of insulting you with that shew of superiority, which, though it may not be assumed, is generally suspected in a time of calamity, from those whose previous warnings have

have been despised. I could not bear to shew you a representative whose face did not reflect that of his constituents; a face that could not joy in your joys, and sorrow in your sorrows. But time at length has made us all of one opinion; and we have all opened our eyes on the true nature of the American war, to the true nature of all its successes and all its failures.

"In that public ſtorm too I had my private feelings. I had seen blown down and prostrate on the ground several of those houses to whom I was chiefly indebted for the honor this city has done me. I confess that whilst the wounds of those I loved were yet green, I could not bear to shew myself in pride and triumph in that place into which their partiality had brought me, and to appear at feasts and rejoicings, in the midst of the grief and calamity of my warm friends, my zealous supporters, my generous benefactors. This is a true, unvarnished, undisguised state of the affair. You will judge of it.

"This is the only one of the charges in which I am personally concerned. As to the other matters objected against me, which in their turn I shall mention to you, remember once more I do not mean to extenuate or excuse. Why should I, when the things charged are among those upon which I found all my reputation? What would be left to me, if I myself was the man, who softened, and blended, and diluted, and weakened all the distinguishing colors of my life, so as to leave nothing distinct and determinate in my whole conduct?

"It has been said, and it is the second charge, that in the questions of the Irish trade, I did not consult the interest of my constituents, or, to speak out strongly, that I rather acted as a native of Ireland, than as an English member of parliament.

"I cer-

"I certainly have very warm good wifhes for the place of my birth. But the sphere of my duties is in my true country. It was, as a man attached to your interests and zealous for the conservation of your power and dignity, that I acted on that occasion, and on all occasions. You were involved in the American war. A new world of policy was opened, to which it was necessary that we should conform, whether we would or not; and my only thought was how to conform to our situation in such a manner as to unite to this kingdom, in prosperity and in affection, whatever remained of the empire. I was true to my old, standing, invariable principle, that all things, which came from Great Britain, should issue as a gift of her bounty and beneficence, rather than as claims recovered against a struggling litigant; or at least, that if your benevolence obtained no credit in your concessions, yet that they should appear the salutary provisions of your wisdom and foresight; not as things wrung from you with your blood, by the cruel gripe of a rigid necessity. The first concessions, by being (much against my will) mangled and stripped of the parts which were necessary to make out their just correspondence and connection in trade, were of no use. The next year a feeble attempt was made to bring the thing into better shape. This attempt (countenanced by the minister) on the very first appearance of some popular uneasiness, was, after a considerable progress through the house, thrown out by *him*.

"What was the consequence? The whole kingdom of Ireland was instantly in a flame. Threatened by foreigners, and, as they thought, insulted by England, they resolved at once to resist the power of France, and to cast off yours. Forty thousand men were raised and disciplined without commission from the crown. Two illegal armies were seen with banners displayed at the fame

time and in the same country. No executive magistrate, no judicature, in Ireland, would acknowledge the legality of the army which bore the King's commission; and no law, or appearance of law, authorised the army commissioned by itself. In this unexampled state of things, which the least error, the least trespass on the right or left, would have hurried down the precipice into an abyss of blood and confusion, the people of Ireland demand a freedom of trade with arms in their hands. They interdict all commerce between the two nations. They deny all new supply in the House of Commons, although in time of war. They stint the trust of the old revenue, given for two years to all the King's predecessors, to six months. The British parliament, in a former session, frightened into a limited concession by the menaces of Ireland, frightened out of it by the menaces of England, were now frightened back again, and made an universal surrender of all that had been thought the peculiar, reserved, uncommunicable rights of England;—the exclusive commerce of America, of Africa, of the West Indies—all the enumerations of the acts of navigation—all the manufactures—iron, glass, even the last pledge of jealousy and pride, the interest hid in the secret of our hearts, the inveterate prejudice moulded into the constitution of our frame, even the sacred fleece, all went together. No reserve; no exception; no debate; no discussion. A sudden light broke in upon us all. It broke in, not through well-contrived and well-disposed windows, but through flaws and breaches; through the yawning chasms of our ruin. We were taught wisdom by humiliation. No town in England presumed to have a prejudice; or dared to mutter a petition. What was worse, the whole parliament of England, which retained authority for nothing but surrenders, was despoiled of every

every shadow of its superintendence. It was, without any qualification, denied in theory, as if it had been trampled upon in practice. This scene of shame and disgrace has, in a manner whilst I am speaking, ended by the perpetual eftablishment of a military power in the dominions of this crown without consent of the British legislature *, contrary to the policy of the constitution, contrary to the declaration of right: and, by this, your liberties are swept away along with your supreme authority—and both, linked together from the beginning, have, I am afraid, both together perished for ever.

"What! gentlemen, was I not to foresee, or foreseeing, was I not to endeavour to save you from all these multiplied mischiefs and disgraces? Would the little, silly, canvass prattle of obeying instructions, and having no opinions but yours, and such idle senseless tales, which amuse the vacant ears of unthinking men, have saved you from 'the pelting of the pitiless storm,' to which the loose improvidence, the cowardly rashness of those who dare not look danger in the face, so as to provide against it in time, and therefore throw themselves headlong into the midst of it, have exposed this degraded nation, beat down and prostrate on the earth, unsheltered, unarmed, unresisting? Was I an Irishman on that day, that I boldly withstood our pride? or on the day that I hung down my head, and wept in shame and silence over the humiliation of Great Britain? I became unpopular in England for the one, and in Ireland for the other. What then? What obligation lay on me to be popular? I was bound to serve both kingdoms. To be pleased with my service was their affair, not mine.

* Mr. BURKE here alludes to the Irish perpetual mutiny act, which, however, has since been melted down with other anomalies in the Union.

"I was an Irishman in the Irish business, just as much as I was an American, when, on the same principles, I wished you to concede to America, at a time when she prayed concession at our feet. Just as much was I an American, when I wished parliament to offer terms in victory, and not to wait the hour of defeat, for making good, by weakness and by supplication, a claim of prerogative, pre-eminence, and authority.

"Inftead of requiring it from me as a point of duty, to kindle with your passions, had you all been as cool as I was, you would have saved disgraces and distresses that are unutterable. Do you remember our commission? We sent out a solemn embassy across the Atlantic ocean, to lay the crown, the peerage, the commons of Great Britain, at the feet of the American congress. That our disgrace might want no sort of brightening and burnishing; observe who they were that composed this famous embassy.* My Lord CARLISLE is among the first ranks of our nobility. He is the identical man who but two years before had been put forward, at the opening of a session in the House of Lords, as the mover of a haughty and rigorous address against America. He was put in the front of the embassy of submission. Mr. EDEN was taken from the office of Lord SUFFOLK, to whom he was then under-secretary of state; from the office of that Lord SUFFOLK, who but a few weeks before, in his place in parliament, did not deign to inquire where a congress of vagrants was to be found. This Lord SUFFOLK sent Mr. EDEN to find these vagrants, without knowing where this King's generals were to be found, who were joined in the same commission of supplicating those whom they were sent to subdue. They enter the capital of America only to abandon it; and these assertors and representatives

of the dignity of England, at the tail of a flying army, let fly their Parthian shafts of memorials and remonstrances at random behind them. Their promises and their offers, their flatteries and their menaces were all despised; and we were saved the disgrace of their formal reception, only because the congress scorned to receive them; whilst the state-house of independent Philadelphia opened her doors to the public entry of the ambassador of France. From war and blood we went to submission; and from submission plunged back again to war and blood; to desolate and be desolated, without measure, hope, or end. I am a Royalist—I blushed for this degradation of the crown. I am a Whig—I blushed for the dishonor of parliament. I am a true Englishman—I felt to the quick for the disgrace of England. I am a Man—I felt for the melancholy reverse of human affairs, in the fall of the first power in the world.

" To read what was approaching in Ireland, in the black and bloody characters of the American war, was a painful, but it was a necessary part of my public duty. For, gentlemen, it is not your fond desires, nor mine, that can alter the nature of things; by contending against which, what have we got, or ever shall get, but defeat and shame? I did not obey your instructions—No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me. A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am to look, indeed, to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I *must* have five years hence. I was not to look to the flash of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state, and not a weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of

every fashionable gale. Would to God, the value of my sentiments on Ireland and on America had been at this day subject of doubt and discusssion! No matter what my sufferings had been, so that this kingdom had kept the authority I wished it to maintain, by a grave foresight, and by an equitable temperance in the use of its power.

" The next article of charge on my public conduct, and that which I find rather the most prevalent of all, is, Lord BEAUCHAMP's bill. I mean his bill of last session, for reforming the law-process concerning imprisonment. It is said, to aggravate the offence, that I treated the petition of this city with contempt even in presenting it to the house, and expressed myself in terms of marked disrespect. Had this latter part of the charge been true, no merits on the side of the question which I took could possibly excuse me. But I am incapable of treating this city with disrespect. Very fortunately, at this minute, (if my bad eye-sight does not deceive me,) the worthy gentleman," [Mr. WILLIAMS,] " deputed on this business, stands directly before me. To him I appeal, whether I did not, though it militated with my oldest and my most recent public opinions, deliver the petition with a strong and more than usual recommendation to the consideration of the house, on account of the character and consequence of those who signed it. I believe the worthy gentleman will tell you, that, the very day I received it, I applied to the solicitor, now the attorney-general, to give it an immediate consideration; and he most obligingly and immediately consented to employ a great deal of his very valuable time to write an explanation of the bill. I attended the committee with all possible care and diligence, in order that every objection of yours might meet with a solution, or produce an alteration. I intreated your learned recorder (always ready in business in which you take a concern)

concern) to attend. But what will you say to thofe who blame me for supporting Lord BEAUCHAMP'S bill, as a disrespectful treatment of your petition, when you hear, that out of respect to you, I myself was the cause of the loss of that very bill? for the noble Lord who brought it in, and who, I must say, has much merit for this and some other measures, at my request consented to put it off for a week, which the speaker's illness lengthened to a fortnight; and then the frantic tumult about popery drove that and every rational business from the house. So that if I chose to make a defence of myself, on the little principles of a culprit, pleading in his exculpation, I might not only secure my acquittal, but make merit with the opposers of the bill. But I shall do no such thing. The truth is, that I did occasion the loss of the bill, and by a delay caused by my respect to you. But such an event was never in my contemplation. And I am so far from taking credit for the defeat of that measure, that I cannot sufficiently lament my misfortune, if but one man, who ought to be at large, has passed a year in prison by my means. I am a debtor to the debtors. I confess judgment. I owe what, if ever it be in my power, I shall most certainly pay,—ample atonement and usurious amends to liberty and humanity for my unhappy lapse. For, gentlemen, Lord BEAUCHAMP'S bill was a law of justice and policy, as far as it went; I say as far as it went, for its fault was its being, in the remedial part, miserably defective.

"There are two capital faults in our law with respect to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent—a presumption, in innumerable instances, directly against truth. Therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coërced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of

civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditor, he is to be imprisoned for life:—and thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment, which the law does not inflict on the greatest crimes.

"The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and public judge, but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, any interested, and irritated individual. He, who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a a private man, who is at once judge and party. Every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished by arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy, and without measure?

"To these faults, gross and cruel faults in our law, the excellent principle of Lord BEAUCHAMP's bill applied some sort of remedy. I know that credit must be preserved; but equity must be preserved too; and it is impossible that any thing should be necessary to commerce, which is inconsistent with justice. The principles of credit was not weakened by that bill. God forbid! The enforcement of that credit was only put into the same public judicial hands on which we depend for our lives, and all that makes life dear to us. But, indeed, this business was taken up too warmly both here and elsewhere. The bill was extremely mistaken. It was supposed to enact what it never enacted; and complaints were made of clauses in it, as novelties, which existed before the noble Lord that brought in the bill was born. There was a fallacy that ran through the whole of the objections.

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The gentlemen, who opposed the bill, always argued, as if the option lay between that bill and the ancient law. But this is a grand mistake. For practically the option is between, not that bill and the old law, but between that bill and those occasional laws called acts of grace. For the operation of the old law is so savage, and so inconvenient to society, that for a long time past, once in every parliament, and lately twice, the legislature has been obliged to make a general arbitrary jail-delivery, and at once to set open, by its sovereign authority, all the prisons in England.

"Gentlemen, I never relished acts of grace, nor ever submitted to them but from despair of better. They are a dishonourable invention, by which, not from humanity, not from policy; but merely because we have not room enough to hold these victims of the absurdity of our laws, we turn loose upon the public three or four thousand naked wretches, corrupted by the habits, debased by the ignominy of a prison. If the creditor had a right to those carcasses as a natural security for his property, I am sure we have no right to deprive him of that security. But if a few pounds of flesh were not necessary to his security, we had not a right to detain the unfortunate debtor, without any benefit at all to the person who confined him. Take it as you will, we commit injustice. Now Lord BEAUCHAMP's bill intended to do deliberately, and with great caution and circumspection, upon each several case, and with all attention to the just claimant, what acts of grace do in a much greater measure, and with very little care, caution, and deliberation.

"I suspect that here too, if we contrive to oppose this bill, we shall be found in a struggle against the nature of things. For as we grow enlightened, the public will not bear, for any length of time, to pay for the maintenance of

of whole armies of prisoners, nor, at their own expence, submit to keep jails as a sort of garrisons, merely to fortify their absurd principle of making men judges in their own cause. For credit has little or no concern in this cruelty. I speak in a commercial assembly. You know that credit is given, because a capital *must* be employed; that men calculate the chances of insolvency; and they either withhold the credit, or make the debtor pay the risk in the price. The counting-house has no alliance with the jail. Holland understands trade as well as we; and she has done more than this obnoxious bill intended to do. There was not, when Mr. HOWARD visited Holland, more than one prisoner for debt in the great city of Rotterdam. Although Lord BEAUCHAMP's act (which was previous to this bill, and intended to feel the way for it) has already preserved liberty to thousands; and though it is not three years since the last act of grace passed, yet, by Mr. HOWARD's last account, there were near three thousand again in jail. I cannot name this gentleman without remarking, that his labors and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe,—not to survey the sumptousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals, or to collate manuscripts;—but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original; and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of

of charity. Already the benefit of his labor is felt more or less in every country: I hope he will anticipate his final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realised in his own. He will receive, not by retail, but in gross, the reward of those who visit the prisoner; and he has so forestalled and monopolized this branch of charity, that there will be, I trust, little room to merit by such acts of benevolence hereafter.

"Nothing now remains to trouble you with, but the fourth charge against me—the business of the Roman catholics. It is a business closely connected with the rest. They are all on one and the same principle. My little scheme of conduct, such as it is, is all arranged. I could do nothing but what I have done on this subject, without confounding the whole train of my ideas, and disturbing the whole order of my life. Gentlemen, I ought to apologize to you, for seeming to think any thing at all necessary to be said upon this matter. The calumny is fitter to be scrawled with the midnight chalk of incendiaries, with 'No popery,' on the walls and doors of devoted houses, than to be mentioned in any civilized company. I had heard, that the spirit of discontent on that subject was very prevalent here. With pleasure I find that I have been grossly misinformed. If it exists at all in this city, the laws have crushed its exertions, and our morals have shunned its appearance in day-light. I have pursued this spirit wherever I could trace it; but it still fled from me. It was a ghost which all had heard of, but none had seen. None would acknowledge that he thought the public proceeding with regard to our Catholic dissenters to be blameable; but several were sorry it had made an ill impression upon others, and that my interest was hurt by my share in the business. I find with satisfaction and pride, that not above four or five in this city (and I dare say these misled by

by some gross misrepresentation) have signed that symbol of delusion and bond of sedition, that libel on the national religion and English character, the Protestant association. It is therefore, gentlemen, not by way of cure but of prevention, and lest the arts of wicked men may prevail over the integrity of any one amongst us, that I think it necessary to open to you the merits of this transaction, pretty much at large; and I beg your patience upon it: for, although the reasonings that have been used to depreciate the act are of little force, and though the authority of the men concerned in this ill design is not very imposing; yet the audaciousness of these conspirators against the national honor, and the extensive wickedness of their attempts, have raised persons of little importance to a degree of civil eminence, and imparted a sort of sinister dignity to proceedings that had their origin only in the meanest and blindest malice.

"In explaining to you the proceedings of Parliament which have been complained of, I will state to you,—first, the thing that was done;—next, the persons who did it;—and, lastly, the grounds and reasons upon which the legislature proceeded in this deliberate act of public justice and public prudence.

"Gentlemen, the condition of our nature is such, that we buy our blessings at a price. The Reformation, one of the greatest periods of human improvement, was a time of trouble and confusion. The vast structure of superstition and tyranny, which had been for ages in rearing, and which was combined with the interests of the great and of the many; which was moulded into the laws, the manners, and civil institutions of nations, and blended with the frame and policy of states; could not be brought to the ground without a fearful struggle; nor could it fall without a violent concussion of itself and all about it.

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When this great revolution was attempted in a more regular mode by government, it was opposed by plots and seditions of the people; when by popular efforts, it was repressed as rebellion by the hand of power; and bloody executions (often bloodily returned) marked the whole of its progress through all its stages. The affairs of religion, which are no longer heard of in the tumult of our present contentions, made a principal ingredient in the wars and politics of that time; the enthusiasm of religion threw a gloom over the politics; and political interests poisoned and perverted the spirit of religion upon all sides. The Protestant religion in that violent struggle, infected, as the Popish had been before, by worldly interests and worldly passions, became a persecutor in its turn, sometimes of the new sects, which carried their own principles further than it was convenient to the original reformers; and always of the body from whom they parted; and this persecuting spirit arose, not only from the bitterness of retaliation, but from the merciless policy of fear.

"It was long before the spirit of true piety and true wisdom, involved in the principles of the Reformation, could be depurated from the dregs and feculence of the contention with which it was carried through. However, until this be done, the Reformation is not complete; and those who think themselves good Protestants, from their animosity to others, are in that respect no Protestants at all. It was at first thought necessary, perhaps, to oppose to Popery another Popery, to get the better of it. Whatever was the cause, laws were made in many countries, and in this kingdom in particular, against Papists, which are as bloody as any of those which had been enacted by the Popish princes and states; and where those laws were not bloody, in my opinion, they were worse; as they were slow, cruel outrages on our nature, and kept men alive,

only

only to insult in their persons every one of the rights and feelings of humanity. I pass those statutes, because I would spare your pious ears the repetition of such shocking things; and I come to that particular law, the repeal of which has produced so many unnatural and unexpected consequences.

"A statute was fabricated in the year 1699, by which the saying mass (a church-service in the Latin tongue, not exactly the same as our liturgy, but very near it, and containing no offence whatsoever against the laws, or against good morals) was forged into a crime punishable with perpetual imprisonment. The teaching school, an useful and virtuous occupation, even the teaching in a private family, was in every Catholic subjected to the same unproportioned punishment. Your industry, and the bread of your children, was taxed for a pecuniary reward to stimulate avarice to do what nature refused, to inform and prosecute on this law. Every Roman Catholic was, under the same act, to forfeit his estate to his nearest Protestant relation, until, through a profession of what he did not believe, he redeemed by his hypocrisy, what the law had transferred to the kinsman as the recompense of his profligacy. When thus turned out of doors from his paternal estate, he was disabled from acquiring any other by any industry, donation, or charity; but was rendered a foreigner in his native land, only because he retained the religion, along with the property, handed down to him form those who had been the old inhabitants of that land before him.

"Does any one, who hears me, approve this scheme of things, or think there is common justice, common sense, or common honesty in any part of it? If any does, let him say it, and I am ready to discuss the point with temper and candor. But instead of approving, I perceive a virtuous

tuous indignation beginning to rise in your minds on the mere cold stating of the statute.

"But what will you feel, when you know from history how this statute passed, and what were the motives, and what the mode of making it? A party in this nation, enemies to the system of the revolution, were in opposition to the government of King WILLIAM. They knew that our glorious deliverer was an enemy to all persecution. They knew that he came to free us from slavery and popery, out of a country, where a third of the people are contented Catholics under a Protestant government. He came with a part of his army composed of those very Catholics, to overset the power of a Popish prince. Such is the effect of a tolerating spirit; and so much is liberty served in every way, and by all persons, by a manly adherence to its own principles. Whilst freedom is true to itself, every thing becomes subject to it; and its very adversaries are an instrument in its hands.

"The party I speak of (like some amongst us who would disparage the best friends of their country) resolved to make the King either violate his principles of toleration, or incur the odium of protecting papists. They therefore brought in this bill, and made it purposely wicked and absurd, that it might be rejected. The then court-party, discovering their game, turned the tables on them, and returned their bill to them stuffed with still greater absurdities, that its loss might lie upon its original authors. They, finding their own bill thrown back to them, kicked it back again to their adversaries. And thus this act, loaded with the double injustice of two parties, neither of whom intended to pass what they hoped the other would be persuaded to reject, went through the legislature contrary to the real wish of all parts of it, and of all the parties that composed it. In this manner these insolent

insolent and profligate factions, as if they were playing with balls and counters, made a sport of the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures. Other acts of persecution have been acts of malice. This was a subversion of justice from wantonness and petulance. Look into the History of Bishop BURNET. He is a witness without exception.

"The effects of the act have been as mischievous, as its origin was ludicrous and shameful. From that time every person of that communion, lay and ecclesiastic, has been obliged to fly from the face of day. The clergy, concealed in garrets of private houses, or obliged to take a shelter, (hardly safe to themselves, but infinitely dangerous to their country,) under the privileges of foreign ministers, officiated as their servants, and under their protection. The whole body of the Catholics, condemned to beggary and to ignorance in their native land, have been obliged to learn the principles of letters, at the hazard of all their other principles, from the charity of your enemies. They have been taxed to their ruin at the pleasure of necessitous and profligate relations, and according to the measure of their necessity and profligacy. Examples of this are many and affecting. Some of them are known by a friend who stands near me in this hall. It is but six or seven years since a clergyman of the name of MALONY, a man of morals, neither guilty nor accused of any thing noxious to the state, was condemned to perpetual imprisonment for exercising the functions of his religion; and after lying in jail for two or three years, was relieved by the mercy of government from perpetual imprisonment, on condition of perpetual banishment. A brother of the Earl of SHREWSBURY, a TALBOT, a name respectable in this country, whilst its glory is any part of its concern, was hauled to the bar of the Old Bailey, among common felons,

felons, and only escaped the same doom, either by some error in the process, or that the wretch who brought him there could not correctly describe his person; I now forget which. In short, the persecution would never have relented for a moment, if the judges superseding (though with an ambiguous example) the strict rule of their official duty, by the higher obligation of their conscience, did not constantly throw off every difficulty in the way of such informers. But so ineffectual is the power of legal evasion against legal inquiry, that it was but the other day, that a lady of condition, beyond the middle of life, was on the point of being stripped of her whole fortune by a near relation, to whom she had been a friend and benefactor: and she must have been totally ruined, without a power of redress or mitigation from the courts of law, had not the legislature itself rushed in, and by a special act of parliament rescued her from the injustice of its own statutes. One of the acts authorizing such things was that which we in part repealed, knowing what our duty was, and doing that duty as men of honor and virtue, as good Protestants, and as good citizens. Let him stand forth that disapproves what we have done.

"Gentlemen, bad laws are the worst sort of tyranny. In such a country as this they are of all bad things the worst, worse by far than any where else; and they derive a particular malignity even from the wisdom and soundness of the rest of our institutions. For very obvious reasons you cannot trust the crown with a dispensing power over any of your laws. However, a government, be it as bad as it may, will, in the exercise of a discretionary power, discriminate times and persons; and will not ordinarily pursue any man, when its own safety is not concerned. A mercenary informer knows no distinction. Under such a system, the obnoxious people are

slaves, not only to the government, but they live at the mercy of every individual; they are at once the slaves of the whole community and of every part of it; and the worst and most unmerciful men are those on whose goodness they most depend.

"In this situation men not only shrink from the frowns of a stern magistrate; but they are obliged to fly from their very species. The seeds of destruction are sown in civil intercourse, in social habitudes. The blood of wholesome kindred is infected. Their tables and beds are surrounded with snares. All the means given by Providence to make life safe and comfortable, are perverted into instruments of terror and torment. This species of universal subserviency, that makes the very servant, who waits behind your chair, the arbiter of your life and fortune, has such a tendency to degrade and abase mankind, and to deprive them of that assured and liberal state of mind, which alone can make us what we ought to be, that I vow to God I would sooner bring myself to put a man to immediate death for opinions I disliked, and so to get rid of the man and his opinions at once, than to fret him with a feverish being, tainted with the jail-distemper of a contagious servitude to keep him above ground, an animated mass of putrefaction, corrupted himself, and corrupting all about him.

"The act repealed was of this direct tendency; and it was made in the manner in which I related to you. I will now tell you by whom the bill of repeal was brought into parliament. I find it has been industriously given out in this city (from kindness to me unquestionably) that I was the mover or the seconder. The fact is, I did not once open my lips on the subject during the whole progress of the bill. I do not say this as disclaiming my share in that measure. Very far from it. I inform

you

you of this fact, lest I should seem to arrogate to myself the merits which belong to others. To have been the man chosen out to redeem one fellow-citizen from slavery; to purify our laws from absurdity and injustice; and to cleanse our religion from the blot and stain of persecution, would be an honor and happiness to which my wishes would undoubtedly aspire; but to which nothing but my wishes could have possibly entitled me. That great work was in hands in every respect far better qualified than mine. The mover of the bill was Sir GEORGE SAVILE.

"When an act of great and signal humanity was to be done, and done with all the weight and authority that belonged to it, the world could cast its eyes upon none but him. I hope that few things which have a tendency to bless or adorn life, have wholly escaped my observation in my paſsage through it. I have sought the acquaintance of that gentleman, and have seen him in all situations. He is a true genius; with an understanding vigorous, and acute, and refined, and distinguishing even to excess; and illuminated with the most unbounded, peculiar, and original cast of imagination. With these he possesses many external and instrumental advantages; and he makes use of them all. His fortune is amongst the largest; a fortune which, wholly unincumbered, as it is, with one single charge from luxury, vanity, or excess, sinks under the benevolence of its dispenser. This private benevolence, expanding itself into patriotism, renders his whole being the estate of the public, in which he has not reserved a *peculium* for himself of profit, diversion, or relaxation. During the session, the first in, and the last out, of the House of Commons; he passes from the senate to the camp, and seldom seeing the seat of his ancestors, he is always in the senate to serve his country, or in the field

to defend it. But in all well-wrought compositions, some particulars stand out more eminently than the rest; and the things which will carry his name to posterity, are his two bills; I mean that for a limitation of the claims of the crown on landed estates, and this for the relief of the Roman catholics. By the former, he has emancipated property; by the latter he has quieted conscience; and by both, he has taught that grand lesson to government and subject,—no longer to regard each other as adverse parties.

"Such was the mover of the act that is complained of by men, who are not quite so good as he is; an act, most assuredly not brought in by him from any partiality to the sect which is the object of it. For, among his faults, I really cannot help reckoning a greater degree of prejudice against that people than becomes so wise a man. I know that he inclines to a sort of disgust, mixed with a considerable degree of asperity to the system; and he has few, or rather no habits with any of its professors. What he has done was on quite other motives. The motives were these, which he declared in his excellent speech on his motion for the bill; namely, his extreme zeal to the Protestant religion, which he thought utterly disgraced by the act of 1699; and his rooted hatred to all kind of oppression, under any color or upon any pretence whatsoever.

"The seconder was worthy of the mover and the motion. I was not the seconder; it was Mr. Dunning, Recorder of this city. I shall say the less of him, because his near relation to you makes you more particularly acquainted with his merits. But I should appear little acquainted with them, or little sensible of them, if I could utter his name on this occasion without expressing my my esteem for his character. I am not afraid of offending

ing a most learned body, and most jealous of its reputation for that learning, when I say he is the first of his profession. It is a point settled by those who settle every thing else; and I must add (what I am enabled to say from my own long and close observation) that there is not a man, of any profession, or in any situation, of a more erect and independent spirit; of a more proud honor; a more manly mind; a more firm and determined integrity. Assure yourselves, that the names of two such men will bear a great deal of prejudice in the other scale, before they can be entirely outweighed.

"With this mover, and this seconder, agreed the *whole* House of Commons; the *whole* House of Lords; the *whole* Bench of Bishops; the King; the Ministry; the Opposition; all the distinguished Clergy of the Establishment; all the eminent Lights (for they were consulted) of the dissenting Churches. This according voice of national wisdom ought to be listened to with reverence. To say that all these descriptions of Englishmen unanimously concurred in a scheme for introducing the Catholic religion, or that none of them understood the nature and effects of what they were doing, so well as a few obscure clubs of people, whose names you never heard of, is shamefully absurd. Surely it is paying a miserable compliment to the religion we profess, to suggest, that every thing eminent in the kingdom is indifferent, or even adverse to that religion, and that its security is wholly abandoned to the zeal of those, who have nothing but their zeal to distinguish them. In weighing this unanimous concurrence of whatever the nation has to boast of, I hope you will recollect, that all these concurring parties do by no means love one another enough to agree in any point, which was not, both evidently, and importantly, right.

"To prove this; to prove, that the measure was both clearly and materially proper, I will next lay before you (as I promised) the political grounds and reasons for the repeal of that penal statute, and the motives to its repeal at that particular time.

"Gentlemen, America—when the English nation seemed to be dangerously, if not irrecoverably divided; when one, and that the most growing branch, was torn from the parent stock, and ingrafted in the power of France, a great terror fell upon this kingdom. On a sudden we awakened from our dreams of conquest, and saw ourselves threatened with an immediate invasion; which we were at that time very ill prepared to resist. You remember the cloud that gloomed over us all. In that hour of our dismay, from the bottom of the hiding-places, into which the indiscriminate rigor of our statutes had driven them, came out the body of the Roman catholics. They appeared before the steps of a tottering throne, with one of the most sober, measured, steady, and dutiful addresses that was ever presented to the crown. It was no holiday ceremony; no anniversary compliment of parade and show. It was signed by almost every gentleman of that persuasion, of note or property, in England. At such a crisis, nothing but a decided resolution to stand or fall with their country could have dictated such an address; the direct tendency of which was to cut off all retreat; and to render them peculiarly obnoxious to an invader of their own communion. The address shewed what I long languished to see, that all the subjects of England had cast off all foreign views and connections, and that every man looked for his relief from every grievance at the hands only of his own natural government.

"It was necessary, on our part, that the natural government should shew itself worthy of that name. It

was

was necessary, at the crisis I speak of, that the supreme power of the state should meet the conciliatory dispositions of the subject. To delay protection would be to reject allegiance. And why should it be rejected, or even coldly or suspiciously received? If any independent Catholic state should choose to take part with this kingdom in a war with France and Spain, that bigot (if such a bigot could be found) would be heard with little respect, who could dream of objecting his religion to an ally, whom the nation would not only receive with its freest thanks, but purchase with the last remains of its exhausted treasure. To such an ally we should not dare to whisper a single syllable of those base and invidious topics, upon which, some unhappy men would persuade the state, to reject the duty and allegiance of its own members. Is it then because foreigners are in a condition to set our malice at defiance, that with *them*, we are willing to contract engagements of friendship, and to keep them with fidelity and honor; but that, because we conceive some descriptions of our countrymen are not powerful enough to punish our malignity, we will not permit them to support our common interest? Is it on that ground, that our anger is to be kindled by their offered kindness? Is it on that ground that they are to be subject to penalties, because they are willing, by actual merit, to purge themselves from imputed crimes? Lest by an adherence to the cause of their country they should acquire a title to fair and equitable treatment, are we resolved to furnish them with causes of eternal enmity; and rather supply them with just and founded motives to disaffection, than not to have that disaffection in existence to justify an oppression, which, not from policy but disposition, we have pre-determined to exercise?

"What shadow of reason could be assigned, why, at a time, when the most Protestant part of this Protestant empire found it for its advantage to unite with the two principal Popish states, to unite itself in the closest bonds with France and Spain, for our destruction, that we should refuse to unite with our own Catholic countrymen for our own preservation? Ought we, like madmen, to tear off the plaisters, that the lenient hand of prudence had spread over the wounds and gashes, which in our delirium of ambition we had given to our own body? No person ever reprobated the American war more than I did, and do, and ever shall. But I never will consent that we should lay additional voluntary penalties on ourselves, for a fault which carries but too much of its own punishment in its own nature. For one, I was delighted with the proposal of internal peace. I accepted the blessing with thankfulness and transport; I was truly happy to find *one* good effect of our civil distractions, that they had put an end to all religious strife and heart-burning in our own bowels. What must be the sentiments of a man, who would wish to perpetuate domestic hostility, when the causes of dispute are at an end; and who, crying out for peace with one part of the nation on the most humiliating terms, should deny it to those, who offer friendship without any terms at all?

"But if I was unable to reconcile such a denial to the contracted principles of local duty, what answer could I give to the broad claims of general humanity? I confess to you freely, that the sufferings and distresses of the people of America, in this cruel war, have at times affected me more deeply than I can express. I felt every Gazette of triumph as a blow upon my heart, which has an hundred times sunk and fainted within me at all the mischiefs

mischiefs brought upon those who bear the whole brunt of war in the heart of our country. Yet the Americans are utter strangers to me; a nation among whom I am not sure that I have a single acquaintance. Was I to suffer my mind to be so unaccountably warped; was I to keep such iniquitous weights and measures of temper and of reason, as to sympathize with those who are in open rebellion against an authority which I respect, at war with a country which by every title ought to be, and is most dear to me; and yet to have no feeling at all for the hardships and indignities suffered by men, who, by their very vicinity, are bound up in a nearer relation to us; who contribute their share, and more than their share, to the common prosperity; who perform the common offices of social life, and who obey the laws to the full as well as I do? Gentlemen, the danger to the state being out of the question, (of which, let me tell you, statesmen themselves are apt to have but too exquisite a sense) I could assign no one reason of justice, policy, or feeling, for not concurring most cordially, as most cordially I did concur, in softening some part of that shameful servitude under which several of my worthy fellow-citizens were groaning.

"Important effects followed this act of wisdom. They appeared at home and abroad, to the great benefit of this kingdom; and let me hope, to the advantage of mankind at large. It betokened union among ourselves. It shewed soundness, even on the part of the persecuted, which generally is the weak side of every community. But its most essential operation was not in England. The act was immediately, though very imperfectly, copied in Ireland; and this imperfect transcript of an imperfect act, this first faint sketch of toleration, which did little more than disclose a principle, and mark out a disposition, completed in a most wonderful manner the re-union to the state, of

of all the Catholics of that country. It made us, what we ought always to have been, one family, one body, one heart and soul, against the family-combination, and all other combinations of our enemies. We have indeed obligations to that people, who received such small benefits with so much gratitude; and for which gratitude and attachment to us, I am afraid they have suffered not a little in other places.

"I dare say, you have all heard of the privileges indulged to the Irish Catholics residing in Spain. You have likewise heard with what circumstances of severity they have been lately expelled from the sea-ports of that kingdom; driven into the inland cities; and there detained as a sort of prisoners of state. I have good reason to believe, that it was the zeal to our government and our cause, (somewhat indiscreetly expressed in one of the addresses of the Catholics of Ireland) which has thus drawn on their heads the indignation of the court of Madrid; to the inexpressible loss of several individuals, and in future, perhaps, to the great detriment of the whole of their body. Now that our people should be persecuted in Spain for their attachment to this country, and persecuted in this country for their supposed enmity to us, is such a jarring reconciliation of contradictory distresses, is a thing at once so dreadful and ridiculous, that no malice short of diabolical would wish to continue any human creatures in such a situation. But honest men will not forget either their merit or their sufferings. There are men, (and many, I trust, there are,) who, out of love to their country and their kind, would torture their invention to find excuses for the mistakes of their brethren; and who, to stifle dissention, would construe, even doubtful appearances, with the utmost favor: such men will never persuade themselves to be ingenious and refined in discovering disaffection and treason

in

in the manifest palpable signs of suffering loyalty. Persecution is so unnatural to them, that they gladly snatch the very first opportunity of laying aside all the tricks and devices of penal politics; and of returning home, after all their irksome and vexatious wanderings, to our natural family mansion, to the grand social principle, that unites all men, in all descriptions, under the shadow of an equal and impartial justice.

"Men of another sort, I mean the bigoted enemies to liberty, may, perhaps, in their politics, make no account of the good or ill affection of the Catholics of England, who are but a handful of people (enough to torment, but not enough to fear) perhaps not so many, of both sexes and of all ages, as fifty thousand. But, gentlemen, it is possible you may not know, that the people of that persuasion in Ireland amount at least to sixteen or seventeen hundred thousand souls. I do not all exaggerate the number. A *nation* to be persecuted! Whilst we were masters of the sea, embodied with America, and in alliance with half the powers of the continent, we might, perhaps, in that remote corner of Europe, afford to tyrannize with impunity. But there is a revolution in our affairs, which makes it prudent to be just. In our late aukward con test with Ireland about trade, had religion been thrown in, to foment and embitter the mass of discontents, the consequences might have been truly dreadful. But very happily, that cause of quarrel was previously quieted by the wisdom of the acts I am now commending.

"Even in England, where I admit the danger from the discontent of that persuasion to be less than in Ireland; yet even here, had we listened to the counsels of fanaticism and folly, we might have wounded ourselves very deeply; and wounded ourselves in a very tender part. You are apprised that the Catholics of England consist mostly

mostly of our best manufacturers. Had the legislature chosen, instead of returning their declarations of duty with correspondent good-will, to drive them to despair, there is a country at their very door, to which they would be invited; a country in all respects as good as ours, and with the finest cities in the world ready built to receive them. And thus the bigotry of a free country, and in an enlightened age, would have re-peopled the cities of Flanders, which, in the darkness of two hundred years ago, had been desolated by the superstition of a cruel tyrant. Our manufactures were the growth of the persecutions in the Low Countries. What a spectacle would it be to Europe, to see us at this time of day, balancing the account of tyranny with those very countries, and by our persecutions, driving back trade and manufacture, as a sort of of vagabonds, to their original settlement! But I trust we shall be saved this last of disgraces.

" So far as to the effect of the act on the interests of this nation. With regard to the interests of mankind at large, I am sure the benefit was very considerable. Long before this act, indeed, the spirit of toleration began to gain ground in Europe. In Holland, the third part of the people are Catholics; they live at ease; and are a sound part of the state. In many parts of Germany, Protestants and Papists partake the same cities, the same councils, and even the same churches. The unbounded liberality of the King of Prussia's conduct on this occasion is known to all the world; and it is of a piece with the other grand maxims of his reign. The magnanimity of the imperial court, breaking through the narrow principles of its predecessors, has indulged its protestant subjects, not only with property, with worship, with liberal education; but with honors and trusts, both civil and military. A worthy protestant gentleman of this country now fills, and fills it

with

with credit, a high office in the Austrian Netherlands. Even the Lutheran obstinacy of Sweden has thawed at length, and opened a toleration to all religions. I know myself, that in France the protestants begin to be at rest. The army, which in that country is every thing, is open to them; and some of the military rewards and decorations which the laws deny, are supplied by others, to make the service acceptable and honorable. The first minister of finance in that country is a Protestant. Two years war without a tax is among the first-fruits of their liberality. Tarnished as the glory of this nation is, and as far as it has waded into the shades of an eclipse, some beams of its former illumination still play upon its surface; and what is done in England is still looked to, as argument, and as example. It is certainly true, that no law of this country ever met with such universal applause abroad, or was so likely to produce the perfection of that tolerating spirit, which, as I observed, has been long gaining ground in Europe; for abroad, it was universally thought that we had done, what, I am sorry to say, we had not; they thought we had granted a full toleration. That opinion was however so far from hurting the protestant cause, that I declare, with the most serious solemnity, my firm belief, that no one thing for these fifty years past was so likely to prove deeply beneficial to our religion at large as Sir GEORGE SAVILE's act. In its effects it was, 'an act for tolerating and protecting Protestantism throughout Europe:' and I hope that those who were taking steps for the quiet and settlement of our Protestant brethren in other countries, will even yet, rather consider the steady equity of the greater and better part of the people of Great Britain, than the vanity and violence of a few.

"I perceive, gentlemen, by the manner of all about me, that you look with horror on the wicked clamor which

has been raised on this subject; and that instead of an apology for what was done, you rather demand from me an account, why the execution of the scheme of toleration was not made more answerable to the large and liberal grounds, on which it was taken up. The question is natural and proper; and I remember that a great and learned magistrate" [the Chancellor] "distinguished for his strong and systematic understanding, and who at that time was a member of the House of Commons, made the same objection to the proceeding. The ſtatutes, as they now stand, are without doubt perfectly absurd. But I beg leave to explain the cause of this gross imperfection in the tolerating plan, as well and as shortly as I am able. It was universally thought, that the session ought not to pass over without doing *something* in this business. To revise the whole body of penal statutes was conceived to be an object too big for the time. The penal statute therefore which was chosen for repeal (chosen to shew our disposition to conciliate, not to perfect a toleration) was this act of ludicrous cruelty, of which I have just given you the history. It is an act, which, though not by a great deal so fierce and bloody as some of the rest, was infinitely more ready in the execution. It was the act which gave the greatest encouragement to those pests of society, mercenary informers, and interested disturbers of household peace; and it was observed with truth, that the prosecutions, either carried to conviction or compounded, for many years, had been all commenced upon that act. It was said, that whilst we were deliberating on a more perfect scheme, the spirit of the age would never come up to the execution of the ſtatutes which remained; especially as more steps, and a co-operation of more minds and powers, were required towards a mischievous use of them, than for the execution of the act

act to be repealed: that it was better to unravel this texture from below than from above, beginning with the latest, which, in general practice, is the severest evil. It was alleged, that this slow proceeding would be attended with the advantage of a progressive experience; and that the people would grow reconciled to toleration, when they should find by the effects, that justice was not so irreconcilable an enemy to convenience as they had imagined.

"These, gentlemen, were the reasons why we left this good work in the rude unfinished state, in which good works are commonly left, through the tame circumspection with which a timid prudence so frequently enervates beneficence. In doing good, we are generally cold, and languid, and sluggish; and of all things afraid of being too much in the right. But the works of malice and injustice are quite in another style. They are finished with a bold masterly hand; touched as they are with the spirit of those vehement passions that call forth all our energies whenever we oppress and persecute.

"Thus this matter was left for the time with a full determination in parliament, not to suffer other and worse statutes to remain for the purpose of counteracting the benefits proposed by the repeal of one penal law; for nobody then dreamed of defending what was done as a benefit on the ground of its being no benefit at all. We were not then ripe for so mean a subterfuge.

"I did not wish to go over the horrid scene that was afterwards acted. Would to God that it could be expunged for ever from the annals of this country! But since it must subsist for our shame, let it subsist for our instruction. In the year 1780, there were found in this nation men deluded enough (for I give the whole to their delusion) on pretences of zeal and piety, without any sort of provocation

vocation whatsoever, real or pretended, to make a desperate attempt, which would have consumed all the power and glory of this country, in the flames of London; and buried all law, order, and religion, under the ruins of the metropolis of the Protestant world. Whether all this mischief done, or in the direct train of doing, was in their original scheme, I cannot say; I hope it was not; but this would have been the unavoidable consequence of their proceedings, had not the flames they had lighted up in their fury been extinguished in their blood.

"All the time that this horrid scene was acting, or avenging, as well as for some time before and ever since, the wicked instigators of this unhappy multitude, guilty, with every aggravation, of all their crimes, and screened in a cowardly darkness from their punishment, continued, without interruption, pity, or remorse, to blow up the blind rage of the populace, with a continued blast of pestilential libels, which infected and poisoned the very air we breathed in.

"The main drift of all the libels, and all the riots, was, to force parliament (to persuade us was hopeless) into an act of national perfidy, which has no example. For, gentlemen, it is proper you should all know what infamy we escaped by refusing that repeal, for a refusal of which, it seems, I, among others, stand somewhere or other accused. When we took away, on the motives which I had the honor of stating to you, a few of the innumerable penalties upon an oppressed and injured people, the relief was not absolute, but given on a stipulation and compact between them and us; for we bound down the Roman Catholics, with the most solemn oaths, to bear true allegiance to this government; to abjure all sort of temporal power in any other; and to renounce, under the same solemn obligations, the doctrines of systematic perfidy,

perfidy, with which they stood (I conceive very unjustly) charged. Now our modest petitioners came up to us, most humbly praying nothing more, than that we should break our faith, without any one cause whatsoever of forfeiture assigned; and when the subjects of this kingdom had, on their part, fully performed their engagement, we should refuse, on our part, the benefit we had stipulated on the performance of those very conditions that were prescribed by our own authority, and taken on the sanction of our public faith—That is to say, when we had inveigled them with fair promises within our door, we were to shut it on them; and adding mockery to outrage—to tell them, 'Now we have got you fast—your consciences 'are bound to a power resolved on your destruction. We 'have made you swear, that your religion obliges you to 'keep your faith: fools as you are! we will now let you see, 'that our religion enjoins us to keep no faith with you.' —They who would advisedly call upon us to do such things, must certainly have thought us not only a convention of treacherous tyrants, but a gang of the lowest and dirtiest wretches that ever disgraced humanity. Had we done this, we should have indeed proved, that there were *some* in the world whom no faith could bind; and we should have *convicted* ourselves of that odious principle, of which Papists stood *accused* by those very savages, who wished us, on that accusation, to deliver them over to their fury.

"In this audacious tumult, when our very name and character as gentlemen, was to be cancelled for ever along with the faith and honour of the nation, I, who had exerted myself very little on the quiet passing of the bill, thought it necessary then to come forward. I was not alone; but though some distinguished members on all sides, and particularly on ours, added much to their high

 reputation

reputation by the part they took on that day (a part which will be remembered so long as honor, spirit, and eloquence have estimation in the world) I may and will value myself so far, that yielding in abilities to many, I yielded in zeal to none. With warmth and with vigor, and animated with a just and natural indignation, I called forth every faculty that I possessed; and I directed it in every way in which I could possibly employ it. I labored night and day. I labored in parliament: I labored out of parliament. If therefore the resolution of the House of Commons, refusing to commit this act of unmatchless turpitude be a crime, I am guilty among the foremost. But indeed, whatever the faults of that house may have been, no one member was found hardy enough to propose so infamous a thing; and on full debate we passed the resolution against the petitions with as much unanimity, as we had formerly passed the law of which these petitions demanded the repeal.

"There was a circumstance (justice will not suffer me to pass it over) which, if any thing could enforce the reasons I have given, would fully justify the act of relief, and render a repeal, or any thing like a repeal, unnatural, impossible. It was the behaviour of the persecuted Roman catholics under the acts of violence and brutal insolence, which they suffered. I suppose there are not in London less than four or five thousand of that persuasion from my country, who do a great deal of the most laborious works in the metropolis; and they chiefly inhabit those quarters, which were the principal theatre of the fury of the bigoted multitude. They are known to be men of strong arms, and quick feelings, and more remarkable for a determined resolution, than clear ideas, or much foresight. But though provoked by every thing that can stir the blood of men, their houses and chapels in flames, and with the

the most atrocious profanations of every thing which they hold sacred before their eyes, not a hand was moved to retaliate, or even to defend. Had a conflict once begun, the rage of their persecutors would have redoubled. Thus fury increasing by the reverberation of outrages, house being fired for house, and church for chapel, I am convinced that no power under heaven could have prevented a general conflagration; and at this day London would have been a tale. But I am well informed, and the thing speaks it, that their clergy exerted their whole influence to keep their people in such a state of forbearance and quiet, as, when I look back, fills me with astonishment; but not with astonishment only. Their merits on that occasion ought not to be forgotten; nor will they, when Englishmen come to recollect themselves. I am sure it were far more proper to have called them forth, and given them the thanks of both Houses of Parliament, than to have suffered those worthy clergymen, and excellent citizens, to be hunted into holes and corners, whilst we are making low-minded inquisitions into the number of their people; as if a tolerating principle was never to prevail, unless we were very sure that only a few could take advantage of it. But indeed we are not yet well recovered of our fright. Our reason, I trust, will return with our security; and this unfortunate temper will pass over like a cloud.

"Gentlemen, I have now laid before you a few of the reasons for taking away the penalties of the act of the year 1699, and for refusing to establish them on the riotous requisition of 1780. Because I would not suffer any thing which may be for your satisfaction to escape, permit me just to touch on the objections urged against our act and our resolves, and intended as a justification of the violence offered to both houses. 'Parliament,' they assert, 'was

'too hasty, and they ought, in so essential and alarming a 'change, to have proceeded with a far greater degree of 'deliberation.' The direct contrary. Parliament was too slow. They took fourscore years to deliberate on the repeal of an act which ought not to have survived a second session. When at length, after a procrastination of near a century, the business was taken up, it proceeded in the most public manner by the ordinary stages, and as slowly as a law so evidently right as to be resisted by none, would naturally advance. Had it been read three times in one day, we should have shewn only a becoming readiness to recognise by protection the undoubted dutiful behaviour of those whom we had but too long punished for offences of presumption or conjecture. But for what end was that bill to linger beyond the usual period of an unopposed measure? Was it to be delayed until a rabble in Edinburgh should dictate to the church of England what measure of persecution was fitting for her safety? Was it to be adjourned until a fanatical force could be collected in London, sufficient to frighten us out of all our ideas of policy and justice? Were we to wait for the profound lectures on the reason of state, ecclesiastical and political, which the Protestant association have since condescended to read to us? Or were we, seven hundred peers and commoners, the only persons ignorant of the ribbald invectives which occupy the place of argument in those remonstrances, which every man of common observation had heard a thousand times over, and a thousand times over had despised? All men had before heard what they have to say; and all men at this day know what they dare to do; and I trust, all honest men are equally influenced by the one and by the other.

"But they tell us, that those our fellow-citizens, whose chains we have a little relaxed, are enemies to liberty, and our

our free constitution—Not enemies, I presume, to their *own* liberty. And as to the constitution, until we give them some share in it, I do not know upon what pretence we can examine into their opinions about a business in which they have no interest or concern. But after all, are we equally sure, that they are adverse to our constitution, as that our statutes are hostile and destructive to them? For my part, I have reason to believe, their opinions and inclinations in that respect are various, exactly like those of other men: and if they lean more to the crown than I, and than many of you think *we* ought, we must remember that he who aims at another's life, is not to be surprized if he flies into any sanctuary that will receive him. The tenderness of the executive power is the natural asylum of those upon whom the laws have declared war; and to complain that men are inclined to favor the means of their own safety is so absurd, that one forgets the injustice in the ridicule.

"I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned, (principles, that I hope will only depart with my last breath,) that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice. Nor do I believe, that any good constitutions of government or of freedom, can find it necessary for their security to doom any part of the people to a permanent slavery. Such a constitution of freedom, if such can be, is in effect no more than another name for the tyranny of the strongest faction; and factions in republics have been, and are, full as capable as monarchs, of the most cruel oppression and injustice. It is but too true, that the love and even the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare. It is but too true, that there are many, whose whole scheme of freedom is made up of pride, perverseness, and insolence. They feel themselves in a state of thraldom, they imagine that their souls

are cooped and cabbined in, unless they have some man, or some body of men, dependent on their mercy. This desire of having some one below them, descends to those who are the very lowest of all; and a Protestant cobler, debased by his poverty, but exalted by his share of the ruling church, feels a pride in knowing it is by his generosity alone, that the peer, whose footman's instep he measures, is able to keep his chaplain from a jail. This disposition is the true source of the passion, which many men, in very humble life, have taken to the American war. *Our* subjects in America; *our* colonies; *our* dependants. This lust of party-power is the liberty they hunger and thirst for; and this Syren song of ambition has charmed ears, that one would have thought were never organised to that sort of music. This way of *proscribing the citizens by denominations and general descriptions*, dignified by the name of reason of state, and security for constitutions and commonwealths, is nothing better at bottom than the miserable invention of an ungenerous ambition, which would fain hold the sacred trust of power, without any of the virtues, or any of the energies, that give a title to it; a receipt of policy, made up of a detestable compound of malice, cowardice, and sloth. They would govern men against their will; but in that government they would be discharged from the exercise of vigilance, providence, and fortitude; and therefore, that they may sleep on their watch, they consent to take some one divison of the society into partnership of the tyranny over the rest. But let government, in what form it may be, comprehend the whole in its justice, and restrain the suspicious by its vigilance; let it keep watch and ward; let it discover by its sagacity, and punish by its firmness, all delinquency against its power, whenever delinquency exists in the overt acts; and then it will be as safe as God and nature ever intended

it;

it should be. Crimes are the acts of individuals, and not of denominations; and therefore arbitarily to class men under general descriptions, in order to proscribe and punish them in the lump for a presumed delinquency, of which perhaps but a part, perhaps none at all, are guilty, is indeed a compendious method, and saves a world of trouble about proof; but such a method, instead of being law, is an act of unnatural rebellion against the legal dominion of reason and justice; and this vice, in any constitution that entertains it at one time or other will certainly bring on its ruin.

"We are told that this is not a religious persecution; and its abettors are loud in disclaiming all severities on account of conscience. Very fine indeed! then let it be so; they are not persecutors; they are only tyrants. With all my heart. I am perfectly indifferent concerning the pretexts upon which we torment one another; or whether it be for the constitution of the church of England, or for the constitution of the state of England, that people choose to make their fellow-creatures wretched. When we were sent into a place of authority, you that sent us had yourselves but one commission to give. You could give us none to wrong or oppress, or even to suffer any kind of oppression or wrong, on any grounds whatsoever; not on political, as in the affairs of America; not on commercial, as in those of Ireland; not in civil, as in the laws for debt; not in religious, as in the statutes against Protestant or Catholic dissenters. The diversified but connected fabric of universal justice is well cramped and bolted together in all its parts; and depend upon it, I never have employed, and I never shall employ, any engine of power which may come into my hands, to wrench it asunder. All shall stand, if I can help it, and all shall stand connected. After all, to complete this work, much remains to be done;

done; much in the East, much in the West. But great as the work is, if our will be ready, our powers are not deficient.

"Since you have suffered me to trouble you so much on this subject, permit me, gentlemen, to detain you a little longer. I am indeed most solicitous to give you perfect satisfaction. I find there are some of a better and softer nature than the persons with whom I have supposed myself in debate, who neither think ill of the act of relief, nor by any means to desire the repeal, yet who, not accusing but lamenting what was done, on account of the consequences, have frequently expressed their wish, that the late act had never been made. Some of this description, and persons of worth, I have met with in this city. They conceive, that the prejudices, whatever they might be, of a large part of the people, ought not to have been shocked; that their opinions ought to have been previously taken, and much attended to; and that thereby the late horrid scenes might have been prevented.

"I confess, my notions are widely different; and I never was less sorry for any action of my life. I like the bill the better, on account of the events of all kinds that followed it. It relieved the real sufferers; it strengthened the state; and, by the disorders that ensued, we had clear evidence that there lurked a temper somewhere, which ought not to be fostered by the laws. No ill consequences whatever could be attributed to the act itself. We knew beforehand, or we were poorly instructed, that toleration is odious to the intolerant; freedom to oppressors; property to robbers; and all kinds and degrees of prosperity to the envious. We knew, that all these kinds of men would gladly gratify their evil disposition under the sanction of law and religion, if they could: if they could not, yet, to make way to their objects, they would do their

utmost

utmost to subvert all religion and all law. This we certainly knew. But knowing this, is there any reason, because thieves break in and steal, and thus bring detriment to you, and draw ruin on themselves, that I am to be sorry that you are in possession of shops, and of warehouses, and of wholesome laws to protect them? Are you to build no houses, because desperate men may pull them down upon their own heads? Or, if a malignant wretch will cut his own throat, because he sees you give alms to the necessitous and deserving; shall his destruction be attributed to your charity, and not to his own deplorable madness? If we repent of our good actions, what, I pray you, is left for our faults and follies? It is not the beneficence of the laws, it is the unnatural temper which beneficence can fret and sour, that is to be lamented. It is this temper which, by all rational means, ought to be sweetened and corrected. If forward men should refuse this cure, can they vitiate any thing but themselves? Does evil so re-act upon good, as not only to retard its motion, but to change its nature? If it can so operate, then good men will always be in the power of the bad; and virtue, by a dreadful reverse of order, must lie under perpetual subjection and bondage to vice.

" As to the opinion of the people, which some think, in such cases, is to be implicitly obeyed; near two years' tranquillity, whic hfollowed the act, and its instant imitation in Ireland, proved abundantly, that the late horrible spirit was, in a great measure, the act of insidious art, and perverse industry, and gross misrepresentation. But suppose that the dislike had been much more deliberate, and much more general than I am persuaded it was— When we know that the opinions of even the greatest multitudes are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the masters of my conscience.

science. But if it be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am, that such *things*, as they and I, are possessed of no such power. No man carries farther than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interest of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humors. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in, any innocent buffooneries, to divert them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient, creature whatsoever, no, not so much as a kitling to torment.

"But, if I profess all this impolitic stubborness, "I may chance never to be elected into parliament." It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of parliament, to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself indeed most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life, hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place, wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any

measure giving quiet to private property, and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling Kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the goodwill of his countrymen; if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book—I might wish to read a page or two more—but this is enough for my measure—I have not lived in vain.

"And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind, that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted.

"Gentlemen, I submit the whole to your judgment. Mr. Mayor, I thank you for the trouble you have taken on this occasion. In your state of health it is particularly obliging.

obliging. If this company should think it advisable for me to withdraw, I shall respectfully retire: if you think otherwise, I shall go directly to the Council-house and to the 'Change, and, without a moment's delay, begin my canvass."

The company, whose zeal for Mr. BURKE was not a little increased by this candid and eloquent vindication of his conduct, immediately came to the following resolutions:

I. "That Mr. BURKE, as a representative for this city, has done all possible honor to himself as a senator and a man, and that we do heartily and honestly approve of his conduct, as the result of an enlightened loyalty to his sovereign; a warm and zealous love to his country, through its widely-extended empire; a jealous and watchful care of the liberties of his fellow-subjects; an enlarged and liberal understanding of our commercial interest; a humane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest ranks of the community; and a truly wise, politic, and tolerant spirit in supporting the national church, with a reasonable indulgence to all who differ from it; and we wish to express the most marked abhorrence of the base arts which have been employed without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent his eminent services to his country.

II. "That this resolution be copied out, and signed by the chairman, and be by him presented to Mr. BURKE, as the fullest expression of the respectful and grateful sense we entertain of his merits and services, public and private, to the citizens of Bristol, as a man and a representative.

IV. "That it is the earnest request of this meeting to Mr. BURKE, that he should again offer himself a

candidate

candidate to represent this city in parliament; assuring him of that full and strenuous support which is due to the merits of so excellent a representative."

The third resolution was a vote of thanks in the usual form to the Mayor, who had presided at the meeting.

This business being ended, Mr. BURKE, accompanied by a great number of respectable citizens, went to the Council-house, and thence to the Exchange, where he offered himself as a candidate, according to established custom, and entered upon a contest, which was vigorously supported by his friends on that and the two following days. But finding the tide of prejudice too strong against him, he declined on Saturday morning the 9th of September a continuance of the poll, thinking it far better, as he declared, "with his strength unspent, and his reputation unimpaired, to do, early and from foresight, that which he might be obliged to do from necessity at last." His farewel speech was very short, but impressive. He did not affect to conceal his uneasiness at the disappointment, very candidly remarking, that it was in general more unpleasant to be rejected after long trial, than not to be chosen at all. "But, gentlemen," added he, "I will see nothing except your former kindness, and I will give way to no other sentiments than those of gratitude. From the bottom of my heart I thank you for what you have done for me. You have given me a long term which is now expired. I have performed the conditions and enjoyed all the profits to the full; and I now surrender your estate into your hands without being in a single tile or a single stone impaired or wasted by my use."

From a glance at the past, and a sentiment of perfect resignation with respect to the future, Mr. BURKE was naturally led to notice the sudden death of Mr. COOMBE,

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one of the candidates, the day before, a melancholy event, which, he said, "read to them an awful lesson against being too much troubled about any of the objects of ordinary ambition. The worthy gentleman," continued the orator, "who has been snatched from us at the moment of the election, and in the middle of the contest, whilst his desires were as warm, and his hopes as eager as ours, has feelingly told us, what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue."

Towards the close of his speech, Mr. BURKE observed, that it had been usual for a candidate who declined, to take his leave, by a letter to the sheriffs; "but," said he, "I received your trust in the face of day; and in the face of day I accept your dismission. I am not,—I am not at all ashamed to look upon you; nor can my presence discompose the order of business here. I humbly and respectfully take my leave of the sheriffs, the candidates, and the electors; wishing heartily that the choice may be for the best, at a time which calls, if ever time did call, for service that is not nominal. It is no plaything you are about. I tremble when I consider the trust I presume to ask. I confided perhaps too much in my intentions. They were really fair and upright; and I am bold to say, that I ask no ill thing for you, when, on parting from this place, I pray that whomever you choose to succeed me, he may resemble me exactly in all things, except in my abilities to serve, and my fortune to please you."

Mr.

# Mr. FOX'S ADDRESSES

## TO THE

## ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

If the speeches of Mr. Fox to his constituents, and at other public meetings on various occasions, had been preserved, we should not want any other models of popular eloquence. But he was either too indolent, as men of very great genius commonly are, or too superior to the ordinary gratifications of oratorical pride, to take the trouble of making out a sketch of any of his speeches from memory, or even of correcting the reports of them given by others. I believe there are only three or four even of his parliamentary speeches, taken down at the moment of delivery by some of his friends, and which, at their earnest solicitation, he condescended to retouch in a few instances, where the meaning was not expressed with his usual perspicuity. But he was roused from his habitual indifference to such considerations by a very general misrepresentation or misconception of his principles and views in bringing forward three motions which he made in the House of Commons, on the 13th, the 14th, and the 16th of September 1792. In order to efface the wrong and very unfavorable impressions which those motions had made upon the minds of his constituents, he published, a few days after, a Letter to them, containing a summary of his arguments in support of each of those motions; and though every thing coming from the pen of Mr. Fox must command attention, yet the young student will read

this

this Letter with double earnestness, as affording an extraordinary and very instructive specimen of a translation by the author from parliamentary into popular language. Those who wish to examine the letter in a political light, will not be satisfied without reading a valuable edition of it, with an application of its principles to subsequent events, by Mr. ADAIR, our present ambassador at the Court of Vienna.

## MR. FOX'S LETTER,
## &c.

" To vote in small minorities is a misfortune to which I have been so much accustomed, that I cannot be expected to feel it very acutely.

" To be the object of calumny and misrepresentation gives me uneasiness, it is true, but an uneasiness not wholly unmixed with pride and satisfaction, since the experience of all ages and countries teaches us that calumny and misrepresentation are frequently the most unequivocal testimonies of the zeal, and possibly of the effect, with which he, against whom they are directed, has served the public.

" But I am informed, that I now labour under a misfortune of a far different nature from these, and which can excite no other sensations than those of concern and humiliation. I am told that you in general disapprove my late conduct, and that, even among those whose partiality to me was most conspicuous, there are many who, when I am attacked upon the present occasion, profess themselves neither able nor willing to defend me.

" That your unfavorable opinion of me, (if in fact you entertain any such) is owing to misrepresentation, I can

I can have no doubt. To do away the effects of this misrepresentation is the object of this Letter; and I know of no mode by which I can accomplish this object at once so fairly and (as I hope) so effectually, as by stating to you the different motions which I have made in the House of Commons in the first days of this session, together with the motives and arguments which induced me to make them.—On the first day I moved the House to substitute, in place of the Address, the following Amendment:

'To express to his Majesty our most zealous attachment to the excellent constitution of this free country, our sense of the invaluable blessings which are derived from it, and our unshaken determination to maintain and preserve it.—To assure his Majesty, that, uniting with all his Majesty's faithful subjects in those sentiments of loyalty to the Throne, and attachment to the Constitution, we feel in common with them the deepest anxiety and concern, when we see those measures adopted by the Executive Government, which the law authorizes only in cases of insurrection within this realm.

'That his Majesty's faithful Commons, assembled in a manner new and alarming to the country, think it their first duty, and will make it their first business, to inform themselves of the causes of this measure, being equally zealous to enforce a due obedience to the laws on the one hand, and a faithful execution of them on the other.'

"My motive for this measure was, that I thought it highly important, both in a constitutional and a prudential view, that the House should be thoroughly informed of the ground of calling out the militia, and of its own meeting, before it proceeded upon other business.

"The law enables the King, in certain cases, by the advice of his Privy Council, having previously declared the cause, to call forth the militia—and positively enjoins, that whenever such a measure is taken, Parliament shall be summoned immediately.

"This law, which provided that we should meet, seemed to me to point out to us our duty when met, and to require of us, if not by its letter, yet by a fair interpretation of its spirit, to make it our first business, to examine into the causes that had been stated in the Proclamation as the motives for exercising an extraordinary power lodged in the Crown for extraordinary occasions; to ascertain whether they were true in fact, and whether, if true, they were of such a nature as to warrant the proceeding that had been grounded on them.

"Such a mode of conduct, if right upon general principles, appeared to me peculiarly called for by the circumstances under which we were assembled; and by the ambiguity with which the causes of resorting for the first time to this prerogative, were stated and defended.

"The insurrections (it is said) at Yarmouth, Shields, and other places, gave Ministers a legal right to act; and the general state of the country, independently of these insurrections, made it expedient for them to avail themselves of this right. In other words, insurrection was the *pretext*, the general state of the country the *cause* of the measure. Yet insurrection was the motive stated in the Proclamation: and the Act of Parliament enjoins the disclosure, not of the pretext, but of the cause; so that it appeared to be doubtful whether even the letter of the law had been obeyed; but if it had, to this mode of professing one motive and acting upon another, however agreeable to the habits of some men, I thought it my duty to dis-

suade

suade the House of Commons from giving any sanction or countenance whatever.

"In a prudential view, surely information ought to precede judgment; and we were bound to know what really was the state of the country, before we delivered our opinion of it in the Address. Whenever the House is called upon to declare an opinion of this nature, the weight which ought to belong to such a declaration, makes it highly important that it should be founded on the most authentic information, and that it should be clear and distinct. Did the House mean to approve the measure taken by Administration, upon the ground of the public pretence of insurrections? If so, they were bound to have before them the facts relative to those insurrections, to the production of which no objection could be stated. Did they mean by their Address to declare that the general situation of the country was in itself a justification of what had been done? Upon this supposition, it appeared to me equally necessary for them so to inform themselves, as to enable them to state with precision to the public the circumstances in this situation to which they particularly adverted. If they saw reason to fear impending tumults and insurrections, of which the danger was imminent and pressing, the measures of his Majesty's Ministers might be well enough adapted to such an exigency; but surely the evidence of such a danger was capable of being submitted either to the House or to a Secret Committee; and of its existence without such evidence, no man could think it becoming for such a body as the House of Commons to declare their belief.

"If, therefore, the Address was to be founded upon either of the suppositions above stated, a previous inquiry was absolutely necessary. But there were some whose

apprehensions were directed not so much to any insurrections, either actually existing, or immediately impending, as to the progress of what are called French opinions, propagated, as it is supposed, with industry, and encouraged with success; and to the mischiefs which might in future time arise from the spirit of disobedience and disorder, which these doctrines are calculated to inspire. This danger, they said, was too notorious to require proof; its reality could better be ascertained by the separate observations of individual members, than by any proceeding which the House could institute in its collective capacity; and upon this ground, therefore, the Address might be safely voted, without any previous inquiry.

"To have laid any ground for approving without examination, was a great point gained for those who wished to applaud the conduct of Administration; but in this instance I fear the foundation has been laid without due regard to the nature of the superstructure which it is intended to support; for, if the danger consist in false but seducing theories, and our apprehensions be concerning what such theories may in process of time produce, to such an evil it is difficult to conceive how any of the measures which have been pursued are in any degree applicable. Opinions must have taken the shape of overt acts, before they can be resisted by the fortifications in the Tower; and the sudden imbodying of the militia, and the drawing the regular troops to the capital, seem to me measures calculated to meet an immediate, not a distant mischief.

"Impressed with these ideas, I could no more vote upon this vague reason, than upon those of a more definite nature; since, if in one case the premises wanted proof, in the other, where proof was said to be superfluous, the conclusion

clusion was not just. If the majority of the House thought differently from me, and if this last ground of general apprehension of future evils, (the only one of all that were stated, upon which it could with any colour of reason be pretended that evidence was not both practicable and necessary,) appeared to them to justify the measures of government; then, I say they ought to have declared explicitly the true meaning of their vote, and either to have disclaimed distinctly any belief in those impending tumults and insurrections; which had filled the minds of so many thousands of our fellow-subjects with the most anxious apprehensions; or have commenced an inquiry concerning them, the result of which would have enabled the House to lay before the public a true and authentic state of the nation, to put us upon our guard against real perils, and to dissipate chimerical alarms.

"I am aware, that there were some persons who thought, that to be upon our guard was so much our first interest, in the present posture of affairs, that even to conceal the truth was less mischievous than to diminish the public terror. They dreaded inquiry, lest it should produce light; they felt so strongly the advantage of obscurity in inspiring terror, that they overlooked its other property of causing real peril. They were so alive to the dangers belonging to false security, that they were insensible to those arising from groundless alarms.—In this frame of mind they might, for a moment, forget, that integrity and sincerity ought ever to be the characteristic virtues of a British House of Commons; and while they were compelled to admit that the House could not, without inquiry, profess its belief of dangers which (if true) might be substantiated by evidence, they might, nevertheless, be unwilling that the salutary alarm (for such they deemed it) arising from these supposed dangers in the minds of the people,

should be wholly quieted. What they did not themselves credit, they might wish to be believed by others. Dangers, which they considered as distant, they were not displeased that the public should suppose near, in order to excite more vigorous exertions.

"To these systems of crooked policy and pious fraud, I have always entertained a kind of instinctive and invincible repugnance; and if I had nothing else to advance in defence of my conduct but this feeling, of which I cannot divest myself, I should be far from fearing your displeasure. But are there, in truth, no evils in a false alarm, besides the disgrace attending those who are concerned in propagating it? Is it nothing to destroy peace, harmony, and confidence, among all ranks of citizens? Is it nothing to give a general credit and countenance to suspicions, which every man may point as his worst passions incline him? In such a state, all political animosities are inflamed. We confound the mistaken speculatist with the desperate incendiary. We extend the prejudices which we have conceived against individuals, to the political party, or even to the religious sect of which they are members. In this spirit a judge declared from the bench, in the last century, that poisoning was a Popish trick; and I should not be surprised if bishops were now to preach from the pulpit, that sedition is a Presbyterian or a Unitarian vice. Those who differ from us in their ideas of the constitution, in this paroxysm of alarm we consider as confederated to destroy it. Forbearance and toleration have no place in our minds; for who can tolerate opinions, which, according to what the deluders teach, and rage and fear incline the deluded to believe, attack our lives, our properties, and our religion?

"This situation I thought it my duty, if possible, to avert, by promoting an inquiry. By this measure the guilty,

guilty, if such there are, would have been detected, and the innocent liberated from suspicion.

"My proposal was rejected by a great majority. I defer with all due respect to their opinion, but retain my own.

"My next motion was for the insertion of the following words in the Address:——'Trusting that your Majesty will employ every means of negotiation, consistent with the honour and safety of this country, to avert the calamities of war.

"My motive in this instance is too obvious to require an explanation; and I think it the less necessary to dwell much on this subject, because with respect to the desirableness of peace at all times, and more particularly in the present, I have reason to believe that your sentiments do not differ from mine. If we look to the country where the cause of war was said principally to originate, the situation of the United Provinces appeared to me to furnish abundance of prudential arguments in favour of peace. If we looked to Ireland, I saw nothing there that would not discourage a wise statesman from putting the connexion between the two kingdoms to an unnecessary hazard. At home, if it be true that there are seeds of discontent, war is the hot-bed in which these seeds will soonest vegetate; and of all wars, in this point of view, that war is most to be dreaded, in the cause of which Kings may be supposed to be more concerned than their subjects.

"I wished, therefore, most earnestly for peace; and experience had taught me, that the voice even of a minority in the House of Commons, might not be wholly without effect, in deterring the King's Ministers from irrational projects of war. Even upon this occasion, if I had been more supported, I am persuaded our chance of preserv-

ing the blessings of peace would be better than it appears to be at present.

"I come now to my third motion: 'That an humble 'address be presented to his Majesty, that his Majesty 'will be graciously pleased to give directions, that a Mi-'nister may be sent to Paris, to treat with those persons 'who exercise provisionally the functions of executive 'government in France, touching such points as may be 'in discussion between his Majesty and his Allies, and 'the French nation;' which, if I am rightly informed, is that which has been most generally disapproved. It was made upon mature consideration, after much deliberation with myself, and much consultation with others; and notwithstanding the various misrepresentations of my motives in making it, and the misconception in its tendency, which have prepossessed many against it, I cannot repent of an act, which if I had omitted, I should think myself deficient in the duty which I owe to you, and to my country at large.

"The motives which urged me to make it were the same desire of peace which actuated me in the former motion, if it could be preserved on safe and honorable terms; and if this were impossible, an anxious wish that the grounds of war might be just, clear, and intelligible.

"If we or our ally have suffered injury or insult, or if the independence of Europe be menaced by inordinate and successful ambition, I know no means of preserving peace but by obtaining reparation for the injury, satisfaction for the insult, or security against the design which we apprehend; and I know no means of obtaining any of these objects but by addressing ourselves to the power of whom we complain.

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"If the exclusive navigation of the Scheldt or any other right belonging to the States General, has been invaded, the French Executive Council are the invaders, and of them we must ask redress. If the rights of neutral nations have been attacked by the decree of the 19th of November, the National Convention have attacked them, and from that Convention, through the organ by which they speak to foreign courts and nations, their Minister for foreign affairs, we must demand explanation, disavowal, or such other satisfaction as the case may require. If the manner, in which the same Convention have received and answered some of our countrymen who have addressed them, be thought worthy notice, precisely of the same persons, and in the same manner, must we demand satisfaction upon that head also. If the security of Europe, by any conquests made or apprehended, be endangered to such a degree as to warrant us, on the principles as well of justice as of policy, to enforce by arms a restitution of conquests already made, or a renunciation of such as may have been projected, from the Executive Power of France, in this instance again, must we ask such restitution or such renunciation. How all, or any of these objects could be attained but by negotiation carried on by authorized Ministers, I could not conceive. I knew, indeed, that there were some persons whose notions of dignity were far different from mine, and who, in that point of view, would have preferred a clandestine, to an avowed negotiation; but I confess I thought this mode of proceeding neither honorable nor safe; and, with regard to some of our complaints, wholly impracticable.—Not honorable, because to seek private and circuitous channels of communication seems to suit the conduct, rather of such as sue for a favor, than of a great nation which demands satisfaction. Not safe, because neither a declaration from

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an authorised agent, nor a mere gratuitous repeal of the decrees complained of, (and what more could such a negotiation aim at?) would afford us any security against the revival of the claims which we oppose; and lastly, impracticable with respect to that part of the question which regards the security of Europe, because such security could not be provided for by the repeal of a decree, or any thing that might be the result of a private negotiation, but could only be obtained by a formal treaty, to which the existing French government must of necessity be a party; and I know of no means by which it can become a party to such a treaty, or to any treaty at all, but by a Minister publicly authorized, and publicly received. Upon these grounds, and with these views, as a sincere friend to peace, I thought it my duty to suggest, what appeared to me, on every supposition, the most eligible, and, if certain points were to be insisted upon, the only means of preserving that invaluable blessing.

"But I had still a further motive; and if peace could not be preserved, I considered the measure which I recommended as highly useful in another point of view. To declare war is, by the constitution, the prerogative of the King; but to grant or withhold the means of carrying it on is (by the same constitution) the privilege of the people, through their representatives; and upon the people at large, by a law paramount to all Constitutions,—the law of Nature and Necessity, must fall the burdens and sufferings, which are the too sure attendants upon that calamity. It seems therefore reasonable, that they, who are to pay and to suffer, should be distinctly informed of the object for which war is made; and I conceived nothing would tend to this information so much as an avowed negotiation, because from the result of such a negotiation, and by no other means, could we, with any degree of

of certainty, learn, how far the French were willing to satisfy us in all, or any of these points, which have been publicly held forth as the grounds of complaint against them. If in none of these any satisfactory explanations were given, we should all admit, provided our original grounds of complaint were just, that the war would be so too:—if in some—we should know the specific subjects upon which satisfaction was refused, and have an opportunity of judging whether or not they were a rational ground of dispute:—if in all—and a rupture were nevertheless to take place, we should know that the public pretences were not the real causes of the war.

"In the last case which I have put, I should hope there is too much spirit in the people of Great Britain, to submit to take a part in a proceeding founded on deceit; and in either of the others, whether our cause were weak or strong, we should at all events escape that last of infamies, the suspicion of being a party to the Duke of BRUNSWICK's manifestoes. But this is not all. Having ascertained the precise cause of war, we should learn the true road to peace; and if the cause so ascertained appeared adequate, then we should look for peace through war, by vigorous exertions and liberal supplies: if inadequate, the Constitution would furnish us abundance of means, as well through our representatives, as by our undoubted right to petition King and Parliament, of impressing his Majesty's Ministers with sentiments similar to our own, and of engaging them to compromise, or, if necessary, to relinquish an object in which we did not feel interest sufficient to compensate us for the calamities and hazard of a war.

"To these reasonings it appeared to me that they only could object with consistency, who would go to war with France on account of her internal concerns; and who would consider the re-establishment of the old, or at least

some other form of government, as the fair object of the contest. Such persons might reasonably enough argue, that with those whom they are determined to destroy, it is useless to treat.

"To arguments of this nature, however, I paid little attention; because the eccentric opinion upon which they are founded was expressly disavowed both in the King's speech, and in the Addresses of the two Houses of Parliament; and it was an additional motive with me for making my motion, that, if fairly debated, it might be the occasion of bringing into free discussion that opinion, and of separating more distinctly those who maintained and acted upon it, from others, who from different motives (whatever they might be) were disinclined to my proposal.

"But if the objections of the violent party appeared to me extravagant, those of the more moderate seemed wholly unintelligible. Would they make and continue war till they can force France to a counter-revolution? No; this they disclaim. What then is to be the termination of the war to which they would excite us? I answer confidently, that it can be no other than a negotiation upon the same principles had with the same men as that which I recommend. I say the same principles, because after war peace cannot be obtained but by treaty, and treaty necessarily implies the independency of the contracting parties. I say the same men, because though they *may* be changed before the happy hour of reconciliation arrives, yet that change, upon the principles above stated, would be merely accidental, and in no wise a necessary preliminary to peace; for I cannot suppose, that they who disclaim making war *for* a change, would yet think it right to continue it *till* a change; or, in other words that the blood and treasure of this country should be expended in

a hope

a hope that—not our efforts—but time and chance may produce a new government in France, with which it would be more agreeable to our ministers to negotiate than with the present. And it is further to be observed, that the necessity of such a negotiation will not in any degree depend upon the success of our arms, since the reciprocal recognition of the independency of contracting parties is equally necessary to those who exact and to those who offer sacrifices for the purpose of peace. I forbear to put the case of ill success, because to contemplate the situation to which we, and especially our ally, might in such an event be placed, is a task too painful to be undertaken but in a case of the last necessity. Let us suppose, therefore, the skill and gallantry of our soldiers and sailors to be crowned with a series of uninterrupted victories, and those victories to lead us to the legitimate object of a just war, a safe and honourable peace. The terms of such a peace (I am supposing that Great Britain is to dictate them) may consist in satisfaction, restitution, or even by way of indemnity to us or to others, in cession of territory on the part of France. Now that such satisfaction may be honorable, it must be made by an avowed Minister: that such restitution or cession may be safe or honorable, they must be made by an independent power, competent to make them. And thus our very successes and victories will necessarily lead us to that measure of negotiation and recognition which, from the distorted shape in which passion and prejudice represent objects to the mind of man, has by some been considered as an act of humiliation and abasement.

"I have reason to believe there are some who think my motion unexceptionable enough in itself, but ill-timed. The time was not in my choice. I had no opportunity of making it sooner; and with a view to its operation respecting

specting peace, I could not delay it. To me, who think that public intercourse with France, except during actual war, ought always to subsist, the first occasion that presented itself, after the interruption of that intercourse, seemed of course the proper moment for pressing its renewal. But let us examine the objections upon this head of time in detail. They appeared to me to be principally four:

" 1st. That by sending a Minister to Paris, we should give some countenance to a proceeding *, most unanimously and most justly reprobated, in every country of Europe.

" To this objection I need not, I think, give any other answer, than that it rests upon an opinion, that by sending a Minister we pay some compliment, implying approbation, to the prince or state to whom we send him; an opinion which, for the honor of this country, I must hope to be wholly erroneous. We had a Minister at Versailles, when Corsica was bought and enslaved. We had Ministers at the German courts, at the time of the infamous partition of Poland. We have generally a resident Consul, who acts as a Minister to the piratical republic of Algiers; and we have more than once sent embassies to Emperors of Morocco, reeking from the blood through which, by the murder of their nearest relations, they had waded to their thrones. In none of these instances was any sanction given by Great Britain to the transactions by

* " Since this was written," says Mr. Fox in a note, " we have learned the sad catastrophe of the proceeding to which I alluded. Those, however, who feel the force of my argument, will perceive that it is not at all impaired by this revolting act of cruelty and injustice. Indeed, if I were inclined to see any connexion between the two subjects, I should rather feel additional regret for the rejection of a motion which might have afforded one chance more of preventing an act, concerning which (out of France) I will venture to affirm that there is not throughout Europe one dissentient voice.

by which power had been acquired, or to the manner in which it had been exercised.

"2dly. That a recognition might more properly take place at the end, and as the result of a private conversation and (in the phrase used upon a former occasion) as the price of peace, than gratuitously at the outset of a negotiation.

"I cannot help suspecting, that they who urge this objection have confounded the present case with the question, formerly so much agitated, of American independence. In this view they appear to me wholly dissimilar—I pray to God, that in all other respects, they may prove equally so. To recognise the Thirteen States was in effect to draw a claim of our own, and it might fairly enough be argued that we were entitled to some price or compensation for such a sacrifice. Even upon that occasion, I was of opinion that a gratuitous and preliminary acknowledgment of their independence was most consonant to the principles of magnanimity and policy; but in this instance we have no sacrifice to make for we have no claim; and the reasons for which the French must wish an avowed and official intercourse, can be only such as apply equally to the mutual interest of both nations, by affording more effectual means of preventing misunderstandings, and securing peace.

"I would further recommend to those who press this objection, to consider whether, if recognition be really a sacrifice on our part, the Ministry have not already made that sacrifice by continuing to act upon the commercial treaty as a treaty still in force. Every contract must be at an end when the contracting parties have no longer any existence either in their own persons or by their representatives. After the tenth of August, the political existence of Louis XVI. who was the contracting party

in the treaty of commerce, was completely annihilated. The only question therefore is, Whether the Executive Council of France did or did not represent the political power so annihilated? If we say they did not, the contracting power has no longer any political existence either in his person or by representation; and the treaty becomes null and void. If we say they did then, we have actually acknowledged them as repreſentatives (for the time at least) of what was the Executive Government in France. In this character alone do they claim to be acknowledged, since their very style describes them as a Proviſional Executive Council, and nothing else. If we would preserve our treaty, we could not do less: by sending a Minister, we should not do more *.

"3dly. That our Ambassador having been recalled, and no British Minister having resided at Paris, while the conduct of the French was inoffensive with respect to us and our ally, it would be mortifying to send one thither, just at the time when they began to give us cause of complaint.

"Mortifying to whom? Not certainly to the House of Commons, who were not a party to the recal of Lord GOWER, and who, if my advice were followed, would lose no time in replacing him. To the Ministers possibly †; and if so, it ought to be a warning to the

* "If any argument is satisfactory, I have proved that we have recognised the Executive Council; and it is notorious, that through the medium of Mr. CHAUVELIN we have negotiated with them. But although we had both negotiated and recognised, it would be diſhonorable, it ſeems to negotiate in ſuch a manner as to imply recognition. How nice are the points upon which great businesses turn! How remote from vulgar apprehension!"

† "I do not think it would have been mortifying even to them, becauſe in consequence of the discussions which had arisen, a meaſure which had been before indifferent, might become expedient; but as this point made no part of my consideration, I have not thought it incumbent upon me to argue it."

House, that it should not, by acting like the Ministers, lose the proper, that is, the first opportunity, and thereby throw extrinsic difficulties of its own creation in the way of a measure in itself wise and salutary.

"4thly. That by acting in the manner proposed we might give ground of offence to those powers, with whom, in case of war, it might be prudent to form connexion and alliance.

"This objection requires examination. Is it meant that our treating with France in its present state will offend the German powers, by shewing them that our ground of quarrel is different from theirs? If this be so, and if we adhere to the principles which we have publicly stated, I am afraid we must either offend or deceive; and in such an alternative I trust the option is not difficult.

"If it be said, that though our original grounds of quarrel were different, yet we may, in return for the aid they may afford us in obtaining our objects, assist them in theirs of a counter-revolution, and enter into an offensive alliance for that purpose—I answer, that our having previously treated would be no impediment to such a measure. But if it were, I freely confess that this consideration would have no influence with me; because such an alliance, for such a purpose, I conceive to be the greatest calamity that can befal the British nation: for, let us not attempt to deceive ourselves, whatever possibility or even probability there may be of a counter-revolution, from internal agitation and discord, the means of producing such an effect by external force can be no other than the conquest of France. The conquest of France!!! —O calumniated crusaders, how rational and moderate were your objects!—O much injured Louis XIV. upon what slight grounds have you been accused of restless and

 immoderate

immoderate ambition!—O tame and feeble CERVANTES, with what a timid pencil and faint colors have you painted the portrait of a disordered imagination!

"I have now stated to you fully, and I trust fairly, the arguments that persuaded me to the conduct which I have pursued. In these consists my defence, upon which you are to pronounce; and I hope I shall not be thought presumptuous, when I say, that I expect with confidence a favourable verdict.

"If the reasons which I have adduced fail of convincing you, I confess indeed that I shall be disappointed, because to my understanding they appear to have more of irrefragable demonstration than can often be hoped for in political discussions; but even in this case, if you see in them probability sufficient to induce you to believe that, though not strong enough to convince *you*, they, and not any sinister or oblique motives, did in fact actuate *me*, I have still gained my cause; for in this supposition, though the propriety of my conduct may be doubted, the rectitude of my intentions must be admitted.

"Knowing, therefore, the justice and candor of the tribunal to which I have appealed, I wait your decision without fear—your approbation I anxiously desire, but your acquittal I confidently expect.

"Pitied for my supposed misconduct by some of my friends, openly renounced by others, attacked and misrepresented by my enemies—to you I have recourse for refuge and protection; and conscious that if I had shrunk from my duty, I should have merited your censure, I feel myself equally certain, that by acting in conformity to the motives which I have explained to you, I can in no degree have forfeited the esteem of the City of Westminster, which it has so long been the first pride of my

6 life

life to enjoy, and which it shall be my constant endeavour to preserve.

C. J. FOX."

"SOUTH STREET,
Jan. 26, 1793."

# SPEECH OF MR. FOX

## TO THE

## ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER,

## JUNE 11, 1796.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

At the general election in 1796, three candidates offered themselves for Westminster; Mr. Fox, Sir ALAN GARDNER, and Mr. JOHN HORNE TOOKE. The contest was warm and spirited, yet conducted with more temper and dignity than had usually marked some of the former Westminster elections. Few days passed over undistinguished by animated speeches on the part of Mr. TOOKE and Mr. Fox. The following, delivered by the latter, on the day before the final close of the poll, appears to have been very fairly and forcibly reported:

"GENTLEMEN,

"I cannot express the satisfaction I feel, that the numbers on this day's poll have, higher than at any preceding period, placed me above Admiral GARDNER. It has been observed that my speeches from the Hustings were confined to the matter at issue: they were so, because, standing unconnected with any other candidate, I

thought *that* the principal object, to which I ought to draw the attention of the electors. I had another reason for always comparing my numbers with those of the candidate who had been for the greater part of this election, nearest to me on the poll. It was because I conceived a superiority over him to be of great advantage to the public cause.

"I beg leave to dissect the poll in the same manner as Mr. TOOKE did yesterday, and draw this conclusion— That if you deduct those whom influence obliged to vote for Admiral GARDNER, I have a majority of near two thousand independent electors in my favor, who have thus declared their decided disapprobation of the measures of the ministry. It has been said, of the sixteen hundred and sixty-three votes that appeared both for me and the Admiral, that they were so many given to me by the Minister. If it was so, I am very ungrateful; for I do not thank him for them. Such votes appear to me to be inconsistent; but many persons vote rather inconsiderately, and without any enlarged views of policy: besides, might not the motives, which Mr. TOOKE assigned to the fifteen who had voted in this manner for him, have prevailed with those who had done so in my case also?

"Admiral GARDNER has, indeed, said he would wish to be returned with me rather than the other candidate. If this were taken as a proof that Ministers gave me these votes, I could not say what were their motives for the favor. Of this, however, I am certain, that none could imagine it had arisen from any servile advances on my part.

"I know from experience the improbability of having it in my power to address you on the last day of the poll. Permit me, therefore, to take this opportunity of saying a few words on topics, of which I have hitherto forborne

to

to speak. I cannot but animadvert with much severity on the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers.—With the words of religion in their mouths, they have wasted more treasure, destroyed more of God's creatures, and shed more Christian blood, than any Tyrant or Government of Europe. They have spread more destruction than the most devouring of those whom the world call Conquerors: and they have lost more than any of those Conquerors ever gained.

"At home, it is true, with the exception of one of their own miserable spies in Scotland, they have not taken away any lives; but this does not arise from any want of inclination, as is sufficiently evident from their repeated attempts. One of the candidates has told you that they made a most illegal attack upon his life. They certainly did so, and upon the lives of several other innocent persons at the same time; but I call upon those persecuted men themselves to declare, whether even they could have expressed their detestation of those unconstitutional and wicked attempts, with more indignation than I have always avowed.

"With respect to the proceedings in Scotland, and the Court of Justiciary there, I trust my sentiments are also well known. Trials too notorious to be forgotten, have occurred, which exhibit such gross executions of arbitrary power, and such horrid perversions of justice, that it makes one shudder even to read them.—Men of brilliant talents, polished manners, and the purest virtue, are doomed to drag out a considerable portion of their existence, on the dismal shores of Botany Bay. And these sentences, in violation of all law, in violation of all principles of juſtice, in violation of those feelings of humanity

which ought to regulate the conduct of those who administer the laws, have most cruelly been carried into execution.

"I come now to the late acts restricting the meeting of more than fifty persons. I remind you, however, they do not absolutely prohibit such meeting; but only subject you to discretionary dispersion by the magistrates, in case of improper conduct; and I advise you to meet conformably to those laws, and let it be seen whether they dare to abuse the power entrusted to them.

LET THE PEOPLE MEET—Meet when the public cause demands their attention. These laws were only directed against seditious assemblies. Let them, therefore, conduct themselves with propriety, and see who will dare disperse them. Unjust and unconstitutional as these acts are, it is my advice to obey them; but even under such laws, it is still possible for the people to assemble.

"I cannot but observe that ministers are very fond of charging their opponents with using inflammatory language. But if they reduce the country to such a situation, that to speak the truth is to inflame, the fault is in them, and not in those who expose them. I do not wish to inflame the public mind: but I wish the public to be informed; and it is the business of men in power to take care that truth and knowledge be not dangerous to them.

"Never did there exist in Britain a more detestable system of government than at present. I will characterize it in a few words—More blood has been shed in foreign wars than by LOUIS XIV. of France, and more lives have been attempted to be destroyed at home, than under the sanguinary reign of HENRY VIII. of England."

The

The contest terminated the next Monday, June 13th. with the following state of the poll:

| | |
|---|---|
| For Mr. Fox - - - - - - - - - | 5160 |
| Admiral GARDNER - - - | 4814 |
| Mr. TOOKE, - - - - - - - | 2819 |

To the above we shall add the last of Mr. Fox's addresses to his old and steady constituents.

## SPEECH OF MR. FOX

### TO THE

## ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER,

### FEBRUARY 13, 1806.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

Mr. Fox having vacated his seat for Westminster in consequence of his acceptance of the office of one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, a writ was issued on the 7th of February to fill up that vacancy; and the Electors assembled at Covent Garden on the 13th to testify their approbation of the former conduct of Mr. Fox, and, by making him once more the object of their choice, to demonstrate their confidence in his future exertions. On his being proposed and seconded according to form, he thus addressed the electors:

"GENTLEMEN,

"One of the most salutary laws on our statute-book has provided, that when a Member accepts an office in the administration of our Government, he vacates his seat. The object of this law I conceive to be, that such Member shall be called upon to take the sense of his Consti-

tuents upon the propriety of such an undertaking, and that his Constituents shall be afforded an apportunity of judging, whether the man, who returns to them with the *same name*, returns also with the *same principles*. This I take to be the spirit of that law; and if, in appearing now before you to solicit your suffrages, you think that my principles are different from those which originally recommended me to your favor, you ought, of course, to reject me. But if, on the other hand, you consider my principles and disposition unaltered since last I was the object of your choice, I presume to hope that you will, on this occasion, honor me with your usual support.

" This is not the time or the place to go at any length into a consideration of the state of the country—but that this state is highly perilous and calamitous, is unquestionably true. Under such circumstances, I have, in conjunction with many great and able men, ventured to undertake an important office, with a view to contribute our best exertions, to avert from our country the perils by which it is menaced;—and we have done so, fully aware, that there is but too much reason to fear disappointment, and little hope of gaining credit or reputation. Whatever way, indeed, we turn our eyes, we can discover scarcely any thing that is calculated to gratify our wishes, or to encourage our hopes. At home we witness great suffering, privation, and distress; abroad, and in that department with which I am more immediately connected, I can see little from which to draw consolation for the past, or hope for the future. But still amidst this calamitous prospect we reflect with pleasure and with pride upon the valor, the unparalleled heroism of the British navy. This undoubtedly furnishes a splendid exception to the general gloom. The glorious victory of Trafalgar, though accompanied by the irreparable loss of a justly

justly renowned and universally regretted commander, afforded much to compensate, at least in point of character, for the disasters that have taken place in other directions: —that victory, therefore, was peculiarly opportune.

"With regard to the motives which induced me, and those illustrious persons with whom I act, to accept offices, it cannot be supposed that we have been by any means influenced by personal considerations. We have undertaken the government from a solicitude to serve our country, and in the hopes of meeting the support of our countrymen, and without, I repeat, any prospect of credit or advantage to ourselves.

"It is not my intention, Gentlemen, as I stated in my advertisement *, to make you any professions. At my time of life they would be unbecoming, and considering your acquaintance with me, I hope I may believe that they would be unnecessary. I shall only say, that, in whatever station I may be placed, whether in or out of office, I shall ever be found a friend to liberty, an enemy to corruption, and a determined supporter of that weight which the People ought to have in the scale of our Government."

It is almost unnecessary to add, that this speech was received with applause; and that, all hands having been raised in favor of Mr. Fox, he was declared duly elected; upon which he thanked the meeting for this additional

* The following is a copy of the paragraph in Mr. Fox's advertisement, to which he here alludes.

"It has for five and twenty years been the pride of my life to enjoy your uninterrupted confidence and partiality; and my feelings of gratitude have been continually increased by the constancy of your kindness. To make professions would be neither suitable to my time of life, nor to the long connection that has subsisted between us. The crisis is arduous; I feel all its difficulties; and to serve you and my country shall be the business of my life."

mark

mark of their esteem, assuring them that the ample confidence they had reposed in him, he would never be found to betray.

Mr. Fox did not long survive this last proof of the undiminished confidence of his constituents. He died on the thirteenth of September following; and Earl PERCY offered himself as a candidate to supply the vacancy in the representation of Westminster occasioned by that melancholy event. It was generally supposed that Mr. SHERIDAN felt the like ambition, but was unwilling to oppose Earl PERCY, who had the countenance of some of the leading members of administration. On Thursday, the 18th of September, a numerous body of the Electors assembled at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, in pursuance of a requisition, to consider of a proper person to succeed their late much lamented representative. Earl PERCY and Mr. SHERIDAN were successively put in nomination, when the latter, who was present, addressed the meeting to the following purport:

## MR. SHERIDAN'S SPEECH

### AT

## THE CROWN AND ANCHOR,

### SEPTEMBER 18, 1806.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Electors of Westminster, in addressing you upon this occasion, I am afraid, that, before I proceed to the few observations which I feel it my duty to submit to you, I shall be obliged to commence with a request which I am almost ashamed to make for your indulgence, if in consequence of a short but sharp indisposition, from which I am

am just recovering, my voice should not be strong enough to be clearly audible to the full extent of this large assembly.

"Upon that subject which must fill all your minds—upon the merits of that illustrious man, whose death has occasioned the present meeting, I shall, I *can* say but little. There must be some interval between the heavy blow that has been struck, and the consideration of its effect, before any one, and how many are there of those who have revered and loved Mr. Fox as I have done, can speak of his death with the feeling, but manly composure which becomes the dignified regret it ought to inspire. To you, however, Gentlemen, it cannot be necessary to describe him—for you must have known him well. To say any thing to you at this moment, in the first hours of your unburdened sorrows, must be unnecessary, and almost insulting. His image is still present before you—his virtue is in your hearts—his loss is your despair!

"I have seen in one of the Morning papers what are stated to have been the last words of this great man,—'I die happy;' then, turning to the dearest object of his affection, 'I pity you!' But had another moment been allowed him, and had the modesty of his great mind permitted it, well might he have expressed his compassion, not for his private friends only, but for the world—well might he have said, 'I pity you! I pity England! I pity Europe! I pity the human race!'—For to mankind at large his death must be a source of regret, whose life was employed to promote their benefit. He died in the spirit of peace, struggling to extend it to the world. Tranquil in his own mind, he cherished to the last, with a parental solicitude, the consoling hope to give tranquillity to nations. Let us trust that that stroke of death, which has borne him from us, may not have left peace, and the dignified

nified charities of human nature, as it were, orphans upon the world.

"From this afflicting consideration, I pass to one comparatively insignificant; yet it is the question we are met this day to consider, namely, the pretensions of those who have the presumption to aspire to succeed him. An honorable friend has proposed me as a person worthy of that proud distinction. I cannot deny but that it is an object of ambition, unmixed, I think, with one unworthy motive, very near to my heart. I have received a friendly, though public caution, that I may risk the confidence and attachment of my friends at Stafford by such a pursuit. I thank my Monitor for his anxiety on that account; but he may rest assured that I know my constituents better. I have before declined an offer of support for this city upon a general election. My gratitude and devotion to my friends at Stafford bind me to seek no other. I have been six times chosen by them, which is a proof, at least, that, when once elected, I am not quarrelsome with my constituents. To attend to their wishes must of course be an object of my peculiar solicitude, and to continue to represent them, the favorite pursuit of my ambition, even more, perhaps, than that of the representation of Westminster. But it is not inconsistent with that sentiment, nor can it be offensive to the feelings of my constituents, that I should have offered myself to your notice upon this occasion. For my constituents must feel, that it is one thing to be the representative of Westminster, and another to be the successor of Mr. Fox. That, I own, I cannot but consider as an object of the highest importance, of which, if I were not ambitious, I must be insensible.

"Upon the present awful occasion, with such feelings as I know are clinging to your minds, hoping at most to palliate

palliate a loss irreparable—yet, searching with affectionate diligence how best to do so,—to have been the object of your deliberate selection would, I feel, have been to me an inspiring motive, beyond all ordinary encouragement, to have shewn myself not unworthy of the proud preference you had bestowed upon me. I fear not but that my friends at Stafford would have fully entered into this feeling, and not have considered my elevation by you as a desertion of them.

"Having thus avowed my ambition, or my presumption, as some have been heard to call it, I have now to speak of my pretensions. Egotism is always offensive; and I am happy that my learned friend * has left me little or nothing to say on this head. He has stated and I avow and adopt his statement, that my claim to your favor rests on the fact, that I have step by step followed Mr. Fox through the whole course of his political career, and, to the best of my poor abilities, supported him in every one of those measures and in the maintenance of every one of those principles which originally recommended him to, and so long continued him in, your confidence and esteem. It is true there have been occasions upon which *I have differed with him*—painful recollection of the most painful moments of my political life! Nor were there wanting those who endeavoured to represent those differences as a departure from the homage, to which, though unclaimed by him, his superior mind was entitled, and from the allegiance of friendship which our hearts all swore to him; but never was the genuine and confiding texture of his soul more manifest than on such occasions. He knew that nothing on earth could separate or detach me from him; and he resented insinuations against the sin-

* Mr. COCKER, who had proposed Mr. SHERIDAN as the most eligible person to succeed Mr. Fox.

cerity and integrity of a friend, which he would not have noticed had they been pointed against himself. With such a man to have battled in the cause of genuine liberty —with such a man to have struggled against the inroads of oppression and corruption—with such an example before me, to have to boast that I never in my life gave one vote in Parliament that was not on the side of freedom, is the congratulation that attends the retrospect of my public life. His friendship was the pride and honor of my days. I never, for one moment, regretted to share with him the difficulties, the calumnies, and sometimes even the dangers that attended an honorable course. And now reviewing my past political life, were the option possible, that I should retread the path, I solemnly and deliberately declare, that I would prefer to pursue the same course—to bear up under the same pressure—to abide by the same principles—and remain by his side, an exile from power, distinction and emolument, rather than be, at this moment, a splendid example of successful servility, or prosperous apostacy—though clothed with powers, honors, titles, and gorged with sinecures and wealth obtained from the plunder of the people.

" Grateful as I am for the manner in which you are pleased to receive my sentiments, and to espouse my cause, I think it must have been obvious that I have in my mind an eager desire that contest and dissension should be avoided on the occasion of the present vacancy. How is this to be effected but by one of the candidates retiring? A man's pride may be piqued without his mind being induced to swerve from the cause in which he ought to persevere. Illiberal warnings have been held out—most unauthoritatively I know—that by persevering in the present contest I may risk my official situation; and if I retire, I am aware that minds as coarse and illiberal may assign

assign the dread of that as my motive. To such insinuations I shall scorn to make any other reply than a reference to the whole of my past political life. I consider it as no boast to say, that any one who has struggled through such a portion of life as I have, without acquiring an office, is not likely to abandon his principles to retain one when acquired. To be at all capable of acting upon principle, it is necessary that a man shall be independent; and to independence, the next best thing to that of being very rich, is to have been used to be very poor. Independence, however, is not allied to wealth, to birth, to rank, or power, to titles, or to honors. Independence is in the mind of a man, or it is no where. On this ground were I to decline the contest, I should scorn the imputation, that should bring the purity of my purpose into doubt. No Minister can expect to find in me a servile vassal. No Minister can expect from me the abandonment of any principle I have avowed, or any pledge I have given. I know not that I have hitherto shrunk in place from opinions that I have maintained while in opposition. Did there appear a Minister of different cast from any I know existing—were he to attempt to exact from me a different conduct, my office should be at his service to-morrow. Such a Minister might strip me of a situation, in some respect of considerable emolument—but he could not strip me of the proud conviction that I was right—he could not strip me of my own self-esteem—he could not strip me, I think, of some portion of the confidence and good opinion of the people. But I am noticing the calumnious threat I have alluded to, more than it deserves. There can be no peril, I venture to assert, under the present Government, in the free exercise of a discretion such as belongs to the present question: I therefore disclaim the merit of putting any thing to hazard. If I have missed

the

the opportunity of obtaining all the support I might, perhaps, have had on the present occasion, from a very scrupulous delicacy, which I think became, and was incumbent upon me, but which I by no means conceive to have been a fit rule for others, I cannot repent it. While the slightest aspiration of breath remained on those lips, so often the channel of eloquence and virtue—while one drop of life's blood beat in that noble heart, which is now no more, I would not suffer any friend of mine, in anticipation of the melancholy event that has occurred, to institute a canvas. I could not, I ought not to have acted otherwise than as I have done.

"Now, Gentlemen, I come with a very embarrassed feeling, to that declaration which I yet think you must have expected from me, but which I make with reluctance, because, from the marked approbation I experienced from you, I fear with reluctance you will receive it. *I feel myself under the necessity of retiring from this contest.*" [Here Mr. SHERIDAN was for some minutes interrupted by loud cries of No—No—No.] "I beseech you," resumed he, "to hear me with patience, and in the temper with which I address you. There is in true friendship this advantage. The inferior mind looks to the presiding intellect as its guide and landmark while living, and to the engraven memory of its principles, as a rule of conduct, after its death. Yet further, still unmixed with idle superstition, there may be gained a salutary lesson from contemplating what would be grateful to the mind of the departed, were he conscious of what is passing here. I solemnly believe, that could such a consideration have entered into Mr. Fox's last moments, there is nothing his wasted spirits would so have deprecated, as a contest of the nature which I now disclaim and relinquish. It was never ascertained to me until Monday last, after this meeting had

been

been fixed, that Lord PERCY would certainly be a candidate. My friends hesitated in the hope, that it might be left to arbitration which candidate should withdraw. That hope has failed. I claim the privilege of nearest and dearest friendship to set the example of a sacrifice—comparatively how small to what it demands!—Nothing could ever have induced me to have proceeded to a disputed poll on this occasion.—The hour is not far distant when an awful knell shall tell you that the unburied remains of your revered patriot are passing through the streets to that sepulchral home, where your kings—your heroes—your sages—and your poets lie, and where they are to be honored by the association of his noble remains—that hour, when, however the splendid gaudiness of public pageantry may be avoided, you—you—all of you will be self-marshalled in reverential sorrow, mute, and reflecting on your mighty loss.—At that moment, shall the disgusting contest of an election-wrangle break the solemnity of the scene?—Is it fitting that any man should overlook the crisis, and risk the rude and monstrous contest?—Is it fitting that I should be that man?—Allow me to hope, from the manner in which you have received the little I have said on this subject, that I need add no more.

"Yet still would my purpose be incomplete, and my remonstrance inconsistent, if I did not, at the same time that I withdraw myself, urge you to take the measures most propitious to prevent the tranquillity we propose from being destroyed by others. To me there seems no mode so obvious and decisive as adding your suffrages to the countenance given to the noble Earl, who has the support of those Ministers with whom your late illustrious representative lived and died in the most perfect confidence and amity. I turn to him, rejoicing that I shall not be his antagonist—I turn to him with the respect due

to an early character of the highest promise—with the strong assurance of those qualities which engage affection and command respect—on these grounds, I, for one, shall give him my cordial support.

"Gentlemen, I have now executed a difficult and painful task—yet one duty more remains—not a painful but a grateful one—yet one more difficult, perhaps, than that which I have left—it is to endeavour to express to you those sentiments of sincere and eager gratitude, which your voluntarily proffered support, and your indulgent acceptance of what I have this day submitted to you, have so strongly excited, and which is indelibly imprinted on a heart not formed to be unthankful. As a public man, I feel that your approbation rewards my past efforts; and it shall be the animation of my future endeavours."

## Mr. SHERIDAN's SPEECH
### AT THE
### SHAKESPEARE,
### OCTOBER 22, 1806.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

Mr. Sheridan having declined, Earl Percy was chosen without opposition; but parliament was dissolved by proclamation on the 24th of October, before his Lordship could take his seat for Westminster. The general expectation of this event induced Mr. Sheridan on the 20th, to solicit the support of the Electors, as he was no longer prevented by any former considerations from entering the course, which, he said, every motive of duty, gratitude, and fair ambition called on him to pursue. "I make

make no professions," he added: "I am confident you do not expect any from me. What I have been, I shall continue to be. The maintenance of the principles of Mr. Fox is now more than ever a sacred duty. It is a solemn trust bequeathed especially to those who shared his confidence, gloried in his friendship, and followed in his steps, while living. Such efforts as I can make to execute my humble share in that trust will, in my estimation, at all times be overpaid by the continuance of your protection and approbation."

Two days after [October 22] a numerous meeting of Mr. SHERIDAN's friends dined together at the Shakespeare Tavern, when the health of the favorite candidate being proposed by the chairman, and received with great applause by the company, Mr. SHERIDAN rose, and spoke nearly thus:

"GENTLEMEN,

"Having very recently occupied the attention of the Electors of Westminster at some length, and having within the last few days published an address to them, I do not now feel it necessary long to trespass upon your time or indulgence. My honorable friend, the Chairman, who has, I feel, been too complimentary to me, has stated, that the lustre of the star is only visible when the sun has set *. Apply this observation to *me*; for whatever rays I may be capable of shedding forth to illuminate your horizon, you must rather attribute to the gloom created by the setting of that great sun whose loss you all deplore, than to any peculiar merit of mine. For twenty-

* Mr. MOORE, the chairman, having concluded a short panegyric on Mr. SHERIDAN, with modestly stating the disadvantages which he himself felt, when speaking in such a presence—"before a man so distinguished for the splendor of his talents," and observing, "that the star shone brightest when the sun was not seen."

four years have I stood by that illustrious man :—throughout my political life, has he been the object of my adherence and admiration. Before I entered Parliament, I sought him out, and had the honor to enjoy his cordial friendship; and that friendship I have the pride and pleasure to think was never for a moment interrupted to the latest period of his life. It is upon the same ground which urged me to look after, and enabled me to enjoy, that friendship, that I am now induced to solicit your support. An attachment to freedom, and a determination to persevere through life in the principles of Mr. Fox, are the only grounds upon which I can rest a pretension to your confidence. My honorable friend in the chair has talked of supplying the loss of the great man we deplore; but that is quite impossible. For, even in the scale of gradation, all men with regard to him are on a level; and thus I must pronounce my total disqualification. But yet, I will yield to no man in a zealous regard for that sacred liberty, which, however its cause may have been betrayed by treachery bedewed with blood, or profaned by sacrilege in other nations, shall ever stand in my estimation as the highest gift which the Great Creator ever conferred upon man. In devotion to this principle alone do I presume to think myself in any degree equal to your late illustrious representative—to that man, who in powers of mind stood completely unequalled—who, in my judgment, was, as a statesman, superior in intellect, not only to any this country has ever produced, but to any the world has ever witnessed."

Mr. SHERIDAN concluded with repeating the words of his late address, before quoted—"What I have been, I shall continue to be. The maintenance of the principles of Mr. Fox is now more than ever a sacred duty."

THE

# THE EARL OF MOIRA's SPEECH

AT THE

## ANNIVERSARY MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF St. PATRICK,

MARCH 17, 1803.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

When his Majesty's message on the eighth of March 1803, concerning the military preparations then making in the ports of France and Holland, was taken into consideration in the House of Lords, the Earl of MOIRA expressed himself with so much animation and energy as did more than excite applause: he infused the spirit, which he himself felt, into all his hearers: he made them ardent and determined to vindicate the abused confidence and insulted honor of the nation—to prove the competency of England to grapple single-handed with a restless, vaunting, inordinately ambitious, and implacable enemy—to shew the world that British bosoms were fired with the same courage, and British valor nerved with the same energies, which had at all times distinguished their ancestors.

A few days after, at the anniversary meeting of the benevolent Society of St. PATRICK, where his lordship presided as chairman, he availed himself of a seasonable opportunity to diffuse the same sentiments in a fine strain of popular eloquence. He began with some remarks on the happy effects of the institution. "But," said he, "I do not mean to allude to its ordinary design, or that which

which so peculiarly recommends it as one devoted to charitable purposes. There is something in the present crisis of affairs so awful, and there is something in the circumstances of this meeting so different from the ordinary course, that it places all other considerations out of the question. It is at a moment like this, that such a meeting is likely to be productive of the most essential advantages. I look with sanguine expectations to the effect which will be produced throughout Ireland by the sentiments unanimously expressed by a meeting so respectably constituted as this is. I do not wish to sow jealousies; but it is vain for any man to pretend not to see what is the present state of Ireland. It may be said, that an assembly like this is not the proper place for political discussions. I hope I shall not incur the censure attached to such an observation by any thing I shall address to you. I feel on the contrary, a ſtrong persuasion, that every endeavour to impart and diffuse the spirit by which this meeting is actuated, must be of the utmost service to the interests of the empire in general, and particularly of Ireland.

"I consider you, my countrymen, as the representatives of Ireland on the present occasion. The people of Ireland, speaking of you, will say, *These are men met to celebrate a festival in which we are essentially interested: let us see what are their sentiments: let us determine from their expressions what we are to do: they are nearest to the source of government and authentic information: they form a body uncontrolled by ministerial influence, unseduced by power, and unawed by fear: it is from their opinion* (I am speaking the language of the people of Ireland) *we will take the tone of our political sentiments.* I will then say, let this meeting communicate the tone of its sentiments to the people of Ireland. Although we can come to no resolution, yet the sentiments we shall express will be immediately felt

throughout

throughout every part of Ireland. I know that the words I utter will carry with them the force and weight which the sanction of this meeting can alone impart.

"It is, therefore, as the organ of this meeting, that I would say to the people of Ireland—Regard the policy of those whom I will not at present call our enemies, but who certainly have endeavoured to throw a cloud over the prosperity of the country. Reflect that the advantages, which they have uniformly held out, have been founded upon the principles of sowing the seeds of dissention among nations. I will say to the people of Ireland, From what has passed, dread the future. I will say, What have any classes of you in Ireland to hope from the French? Is it your property you wish to preserve? Look to the example of Holland; and see how that nation has preserved its property by alliance with the French! Is it independence you court? Look to the example of unhappy Switzerland: see to what a state of servile abasement that once manly territory has fallen, under France! Is it to the establishment of Catholicity that your hopes are directed? The conduct of the first Consul in subverting the power and authority of the Pope, and cultivating the friendship of the Mussulmen in Egypt under a boast of that subversion, proves the fallacy of such a reliance! Is it civil liberty you require? Look to France itself crouched under despotism, and groaning beneath a system of slavery, beyond what ever disgraced and insulted any nation! Is it possible, then, that any heart nurtured in the blessed air of Ireland can look to French protection for happiness? Is it possible there can be one head so organized as not to see from the evidence of facts for the last few years, that the liberty, which the French offer, is but another term for abjection and slavery? I am not sounding the trumpet of war—There is no man who more sincerely deprecates its calamities than I do, soldier as I am, and ready to

serve my country—Yet if necessity should force us to the conflict, I trust we shall prove to the audacious foe, that British veins still glow with the same blood which vivified the spirit of our ancestors; and that British bosoms still burn with the same patriotic ardor which actuated them in every former period of their annals."

After some farther observations of a similar tendency, his Lordship said, "Whatever may await us, let us meet the peril with intrepid firmness. Danger is a giant to those who fear, but a pigmy to those who know not what fear is; and confident I am, that the spirit of the country will be roused to dreadful vengeance against those who shall dare to provoke it.—The spirit of Englishmen and of Irishmen will manifest, will teach the enemy, that he has mistaken their character, and from their disposition to peace falsely inferred their aversion to war. Let the views of France be what they may, she will find herself greatly deceived in her expectations with regard to assistance or co-operation in any part of the United Kingdom: her views will never be seconded by any but a desperate and impotent rabble."

His Lordship then averted to the stability acquired by the Union of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland; and enlarged in the most impressive manner on the valor of those several branches of the empire, on the identity of interests which knit them together, and the impossibility of any enemy prevailing against them, while they continued firmly united to each other. He trusted that every man in the country would exert himself for the maintenance of the national fame, and observed, "That there was no man so humble as not to be called upon to vindicate in his own person the honor, the interest, the character, and the glory of the British empire."

## MILITARY HARANGUES.

The ancient Historians seldom give an account of any important battle, to which they do not prefix some strong persuasive to heroic exertion, from the commander, whose eloquence may thus be supposed to contribute to his victory. In modern times, these incentives to military ardor are commonly conveyed to the troops in the form of "GENERAL ORDERS," the only way, indeed, in which they can be well communicated to very numerous armies. But whatever animation, whatever degree of electrical fire may be infused into such orders, the stroke is never so impressive as when it immediately issues from the lips of a favourite general. I shall subjoin a few examples of both, and need make no apology for giving the firſt place to the celebrated Speech, which SHAKESPEARE ascribes to

## HENRY V.

AT THE

## SIEGE OF HARFLEUR.

### *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

It was the dying injunction of the late king [HENRY IV.] to his son, not to allow the English to remain long in peace, which was apt to breed intestine commotions; but to employ them in foreign expeditions, by which the prince might acquire honor; the nobility, in sharing his danger, might attach themselves to his person; and all the restless spirits find occupation for their inquietude. The natural

natural disposition of the young king sufficiently inclined him to follow this advice; and the civil disorders of France in 1415 opened a full career to his ambition. Having invited all the nobility and military men in the kingdom to attend him, he put to sea with a large force, and landed near Harfleur, on the 14th of August, at the head of 6,000 men at arms, and 24,000 foot, mostly archers. He immediately began the siege of that place, which was valiantly defended by several of the French nobility; but as the garrison was weak, and the fortifications in bad repair, they were at last obliged to offer terms of capitulations, in which they engaged to surrender, if they should not receive any succour before the eighteenth of September. The day came, and there was no appearance of a French army to relieve them. Yet they still delayed, upon various pretences, to open their gates; till HENRY, incensed at their breach of faith, ordered a general assault, took the town by storm, and put most of the garrison to the sword. It was upon this occasion, that he is supposed to have addressed his men thus:

"Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more;
"Or close the wall up with the English dead.
"In peace there's nothing so becomes a man
"As modest stillness and humility:
"But when the blast of war blows in our ears,
"Then imitate the action of the tiger;
"Stiffen the sinews; summon up the blood;
"Disguise fair nature with hard-favor'd rage;
"Then lend the eye a terrible aspect:
"Let it pry through the portage of the head,
"Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it,
"As fearfully as doth a galled rock.
"O'erhang and jutty his confounded base,
"Swill'd with the wild and wasteful ocean.
"Now set the teeth, and stretch the nostril wide;

"Hold

"Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
"To his full height. Now on, you noblest English!
"Whose blood is fetch'd from fathers of war-proof—
"Fathers, that, like so many ALEXANDERS,
"Have in these parts from morn till even fought,
"And sheath'd their swords, for lack of argument:
"Dishonor not your mothers; now attest,
"That thofe, whom you call fathers, did beget you.
"Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
"And teach them how to war: and you, good yeomen,
"Whose limbs were made in England, shew us here
"The mettle of your pasture: let us swear
"That you are worth your breeding, which I doubt not;
"For there is none of you so mean and base,
"That hath not noble lustre in your eye.
"I see you stand like greyhounds on the slips,
"Straining upon the start. The game's a-foot:
"Follow your spirit; and upon this charge,
"Cry, God for Harry, England, and St. George!"

It was with the remains of this brave army, wasted by the fatigues of the siege, and the unusual heat of the season, harassed on their march towards Calais by flying parties of the enemy, and languishing with sickness as well for want of proper provisions, that the gallant HENRY obtained in about three weeks after the memorable victory in the plains of Agincourt over a French army four times more numerous, headed by the Dauphin and all the princes of the blood, and plentifully supplied with every requisite. This battle is well described by Mr. HUME in the nineteenth Chapter, and third Volume of his Hiftory of England.

GENERAL

# GENERAL WOLFE's SPEECH

TO HIS

# ARMY BEFORE QUEBEC.

## *HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS.*

On the twenty-sixth of June 1759, the armament destined for the invasion of Canada, under the command of general WOLFE, arrived at the island of Orleans, formed by the branches of the river St. Lawrence, and extending to the bason of Quebec. The situation of this city along the base, and the summit of a lofty rock; was supposed to render it on one side inaccessible. It was protected, on the other, by the river St. Charles, the channel of which is rough, and broken, and its borders intersected with ravines. On the left bank of this river the French army, amounting to about 10,000 men, commanded by M. DE MONTCALM, were posted; the encampment extending to the river of Montmorenci to the east, and their rear covered with impenetrable woods. WOLFE perfectly sensible that, unless the enemy could be brought to a decisive engagement, his enterprise must prove abortive, resolved, after some feints in vain made to induce his able and cautious antagonist to relinquish this advantageous post, to attack the French in their entrenchments on the last day of July. The plan of the assault, however judicious, was effectually disconcerted by the irregular impetuosity of the English grenadiers; and WOLFE was compelled to retreat with considerable loss. This disaster made a deep impression on his lofty and susceptible mind. He was observed often to sigh; and to his intimate friends, he declared

clared his determination to die rather than to endure the censure and reproach which invariably attend the want of success.

An effort transcendently bold yet remained to be tried. A plan was formed in concert with the naval commander, admiral SAUNDERS, for landing the troops on the northern bank of the river above the city, and, by scaling the heights hitherto deemed inaccessible, to gain possession of the grounds at the back of the town, where it was but slightly fortified. The admiral, in order to deceive the enemy moved up the river several leagues beyond the spot fixed upon for the landing; but, during the night, he fell down with the stream, in order to protect the disembarkment of the troops, which was happily accomplished in secrecy and silence. The precipice now remained to be ascended; and, with infinite labor and difficulty, the troops sustaining themselves by the rugged projections of the rock, and the branches of the trees and plants which sprang from the innumerable clefts into which it was every where broken, they at last obtained the summit, and immediately formed in order of battle. The intelligence being quickly conveyed to M. DE MONTCALM, that the English army was in actual possession of the *Heights of Abraham*, that commander declared himself unable to express his astonishment, and immediately comprehended the necessity of abandoning his strong camp, and of risking an engagement, in order to save the city. It was just before this dreadful conflict, that WOLFE, in the front of the line, is supposed by the ingenious AIKIN to have harangued his army thus:

"I congratulate you, my brave countrymen, and fellow-soldiers! on the spirit and success with which you have executed this important part of our enterprize. The formidable *Heights of Abraham* are now surmounted; and the

the city of Quebec, the object of all our toils, now stands in full view before us. A perfidious enemy who have dared to exasperate you by their cruelties, but not to oppose you on equal ground, are now constrained to face you on the open plain, without ramparts or entrenchments to shelter them.

"You know too well the forces which compose their army to dread their superior numbers. A few regular troops from Old France, weakened by hunger and sickness, who, when fresh, were unable to withstand the British soldiers, are their General's chief dependence. Those numerous companies of Canadians, insolent, mutinous, unsteady, and ill-disciplined, have exercised his utmost skill to keep them together to this time; and as soon as their irregular ardor is damped by one firm fire, they will instantly turn their backs, and give you no further trouble but in the pursuit. As for those savage tribes of Indians, whose horrid yells in the forests have struck many a bold heart with affright, terrible as they are with a tomahawk and scalping-knife to a flying and prostrate foe, you have experienced how little their ferocity is to be dreaded by resolute men upon fair and open ground: you can now only consider them as the just objects of a severe revenge for the unhappy fate of many slaughtered countrymen.

"This day puts it into your power to terminate the fatigues of a siege which has so long employed your courage and patience. Possessed with a full confidence of the certain success which British valor must gain over such enemies, I have led you up these steep and dangerous rocks; only solicitous to shew you the foe within your reach. The impossibility of a retreat makes no difference in the situation of men resolved to conquer or die: and, believe me, my friends, if your conquest could be bought with the blood of your general, he would most

cheerfully

cheerfully resign a life which he has long devoted to his country."

The blood, indeed, of this heroic commander was the dear price at which so brilliant a victory was to be purchased. WOLFE, who stood conspicuous in the front of the line, received a shot in the wrist, which, wrapping a handkerchief round it, he seemed not to notice, and continued giving orders without the least emotion. But advancing at the head of the grenadiers, another ball pierced his breast, and compelled him to retire to a spot a little distant from the field of action, where he expressed the most eager anxiety to learn the fate of the battle. He was, after an interval of suspense, told that the enemy were visibly broken: and reclining, from extreme faintness, his head on the arm of an officer standing near him, he was in a short time aroused with the distant sound of, They fly! they fly! 'Who fly?' exclaimed the dying hero— On being told, 'The French,' 'Then,' said he, 'I depart content;' and almost immediately expired in the arms of victory.

## GENERAL ORDERS,

### EXPRESSING HIS MAJESTY'S APPROBATION OF THE VOLUNTEERS,

### ISSUED BY THE DUKE OF YORK;

### HORSE-GUARDS, OCT. 12, 1803.

It will be remembered, that upon the renewal of the war with France, the preparations of our government were vigorously seconded by the heroism of the people. Though in addition to other defensive measures, an act had

had been passed for enabling his MAJESTY to call out the whole mass fit to bear arms, in different classes, and to put a certain proportion of them into immediate training, their spontaneous zeal rendered this measure unnecessary. In some cases, the inclination of government was anticicipated, and volunteer associations were formed even before they knew that their services would be accepted. It was enough for them to hear that a vaunting enemy had dared to hold out the threat of invasion: they instantly rose, as with one heart and one arm, to defy his impotent menaces. The ardor of their first offers could only be equalled by their subsequent endeavours to improve themselves in military discipline, and two general reviews of all the volunteer corps in and near the metropolis, on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth of October, their soldier-like appearance, their regularity, and expertness, gave such satisfaction to the KING who reviewed them, that the following acknowledgment of their merit, and incitement to their perseverance, were conveyed in the general orders of the twenty-ninth, the morning after the second review.

" His royal Highness, the Commander in Chief, has received the King's command to convey to the several volunteers and associated corps which were reviewed in Hyde Park on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth inst. his Majesty's high approbation of their appearance, which has equalled his Majesty's utmost expectation.

" His Majesty perceives, with heart-felt satisfaction, that the spirit of loyalty and patriotism, on which the system of the armed volunteers throughout the kingdom was originally founded, has risen with the exigencies of the times, and at this moment forms such a bulwark to the constitution and liberties of the country, as will enable us, under the protection of Providence, to bid defiance to the

the unprovoked malice of our enemies, and to hurl back, with becoming indignation, the threats which they have presumed to vent against our independence, and even our existence as a nation.

"His Majesty has observed, with peculiar pleasure that, amongst the unprecedented exertions which the present circumstances of the country have called forth, those of the capital of the United Kingdom have been eminently conspicuous: the appearance of its numerous and well-regulated volunteer corps, which were reviewed on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth instant, indicates a degree of attention and emulation, both in officers and men, which can proceed only from a deep sense of the important objects for which they have enrolled themselves, a just estimation of the blessings we have so long enjoyed, and a firm and manly determination to defend them like Britons, and transmit them unimpaired to posterity.

"The Commander in Chief has the highest satisfaction in discharging his duty, by communicating these his Majesty's most gracious sentiments, and requests that the commanding Officers will have recourse to the readiest means of making the same known to their respective corps.

"FREDERICK,
"Commander in Chief."

## HISTORICAL PORTRAITS.

The delineations of eminent characters, with which many of our best historians adorn their narratives, are finished so much in the style of popular eloquence, that we are induced to give one or two of them as examples of

our former remark on those interesting portraits, where the pencil of truth traces the outlines, and genius lays on the vivid coloring.

## CHARACTER OF ALFRED:

BY HUME.

"The merit of this Prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any Monarch or Citizen, which the annals of any age or any nation can present to us. He seems, indeed, to be the model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage, or wise man, philosophers have been fond of delineating, rather as a fiction of their imagination, than in hopes of ever seeing it really existing: so happily were all his virtues tempered together; so justly were they blended; and so powerfully did each prevent the other from exceeding its proper boundaries! He knew how to reconcile the most enterprising spirit with the coolest moderation; the most obstinate perseverance with the easiest flexibility; the most severe justice with the gentlest lenity; the greatest vigor in commanding with the most perfect affability of deportment; the highest capacity and inclination for science with the most shining talents for action. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration; excepting only, that the former being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him every bodily accomplishment, vigor of

of limbs, dignity of shape and air, with a pleasing, engaging, and open countenance. Fortune alone, by throwing him into that barbarous age, deprived him of historians worthy to transmit his fame to posterity; and we wish to see him delineated in more lively colors, and with more particular strokes, that we may at least perceive some of those small specks and blemishes, from which, as a man, it is impossible he could be entirely exempted.

"But we should give but an imperfect idea of ALFRED's merit, were we to confine our narration to his military exploits, and were not more particular in our account of his institutions for the execution of justice, and of his zeal for the encouragement of arts and sciences.

"After ALFRED had subdued, and had settled or expelled the Danes, he found the kingdom in the most wretched condition, desolated by the ravages of those barbarians, and thrown into disorders, which were calculated to perpetuate its misery. Though the great armies of the Danes were broken, the country was full of straggling troops of that nation, who, being accustomed to live by plunder, were become incapable of industry; and who, from the natural ferocity of their manners, indulged themselves in committing violence, even beyond what was requisite to supply their necessities. The English themselves, reduced to extreme indigence by these continued depredations, had shaken off all bands of government; and those who had been plundered to-day betook themselves next day to the like disorderly life, and, from despair, joined the robbers in pillaging and ruining their fellow-citizens. These were the evils, for which it was necessary that the vigilance and activity of ALFRED should provide a remedy.

"That he might render the execution of justice strict and regular, he divided all England into counties; these

counties he divided into hundreds; and the hundreds into tithings. Every householder was answerable for the behaviour of his family and slaves, and even of his guests, if they lived above three days in his house. Ten neighbouring householders were formed into one corporation, who, under the name of a tithing decennary, or fribourg, were answerable for each other's conduct, and over whom one person, called a tithing-man, headbourg, or borsholder, was appointed to preside. Every man was punished as an outlaw, who did not register himself in some tithing; and no man could change his habitation, without a warrant or certificate from the borsholder of the tithing to which he formerly belonged.

"When any person in any tithing or decennary was guilty of a crime, the borsholder was summoned to answer for him; and if he were not willing to be surety for his appearance, and his clearing himself, the criminal was committed to prison, and there detained till his trial. If he fled, either before or after finding sureties, the borsholder and decennary became liable to inquiry, and were exposed to the penalties of law. Thirty-one days were allowed them for producing the criminal; and if that time elapsed without their being able to find him, the borsholder, with two other members of the decennary, was obliged to appear, and, together with three chief members of the three neighbouring decennaries (making twelve in all) to swear that his decennary was free from all privity both of the crime committed, and of the escape of the criminal. If the borsholder could not find such a number to answer for their innocence, the decennary was compelled by fine to make satisfaction to the king, according to the degree of the offence. By this institution every man was obliged, from his own interest, to keep a watchful eye over the conduct of his neighbours; and was in a

manner

manner surety for the behaviour of those who were placed under the division to which he belonged; whence these decennaries received the name of frank-pledges.

"Such a regular distribution of the people, with such a strict confinement in their habitations, may not be necessary in times, when men are more enured to obedience and justice; and it might perhaps be regarded as destructive of liberty and commerce in a polished state; but it was well calculated to reduce that fierce and licentious people under the salutary restraint of law and government. But ALFRED took care to temper these rigors by other institutions favorable to the freedom of the citizens; and nothing could be more popular and liberal than his plan for the administration of justice. The borsholder summoned together his whole decennary to assist him in deciding any lesser difference which occurred among the members of this small community. In affairs of greater moment, in appeals from the decennary, or in controversies arising between members of different decennaries, the cause was brought before the hundred, which consisted of ten decennaries, or a hundred families of freemen, and which was regularly assembled once in four weeks, for the deciding of causes. Their method of decision deserves to be noted, as being the origin of juries;—an institution admirable in itself, and the best calculated for the preservation of liberty, and the administration of justice, that ever was devised by the wit of man. Twelve freeholders were chosen, who, having sworn, together with the hundreder, or presiding magistrate of that division, to administer impartial justice, proceeded to the examination of that cause which was submitted to their jurisdiction. And, beside these monthly meetings of the hundred, there was an annual meeting, appointed for a more general inspection of the police of the district; for the

the inquiry into crimes, the correction of abuses in magistrates, and the obliging of every person to shew the decennary in which he was registered. The people, in imitation of their ancestors, the ancient Germans, assembled there in arms; whence a hundred was sometimes called a wapentake; and its court served both for the support of military discipline, and for the administration of civil justice.

"The next superior court to that of the hundred was the county-court, which met twice a year, after Michaelmas and Easter, and consisted of the freeholders of the county, who posessed an equal vote in the decision of causes. The bishop presided in this court, together with the alderman; and the proper object of the court was the receiving of appeals from the hundreds and decennaries, and the deciding of such controversies as arose between men of different hundreds. Formerly, the alderman possessed both the civil and military authority; but ALFRED, sensible that this conjunction of powers rendered the nobility dangerous and independent, appointed also a sheriff in each county, who enjoyed a co-ordinate authority with the former in the judicial function. His office also impowered him to guard the rights of the crown in the county, and to levy the fines imposed; which in that age formed no contemptible part of the public revenue.

"There lay an appeal, in default of justice, from all these courts to the King himself in Council; and as the people, sensible of the equity and great talents of ALFRED, placed their chief confidence in him, he was soon overwhelmed with appeals from all parts of England. He was indefatigable in the dispatch of these causes; but, finding that his time must be entirely engrossed by this branch of duty, he resolved to obviate the inconvenience, by correcting the ignorance or corruption of the inferior magis-

trates, from which it arose. He took care to have his nobility instructed in letters and the laws: he chose the earls and sheriffs from among the men most celebrated for probity and knowledge: he punished severely all malversation in office: and he removed all the earls whom he found unequal to the trust; allowing only some of the more elderly to serve by a deputy till their death should make room for more worthy successors.

"The better to guide the magistrates in the administration of justice, ALFRED framed a body of laws; which, though now lost, served long as the basis of English jurisprudence, and is generally deemed the origin of what is denominated the COMMON LAW. He appointed regular meetings of the States of England twice a year in London; a city which he himself had repaired and beautified, and which he thus rendered the capital of the kingdom. The similarity of these institutions to the customs of the ancient Germans, to the practice of the other northern conquerors, and to the Saxon laws during the Heptarchy, prevents us from regarding ALFRED as the sole author of this plan of government; and leads us rather to think, that, like a wise man, he contented himself with reforming, extending, and executing the institutions which he found previously established. But, on the whole, such success attended his legislation, that every thing bore suddenly a new face in England: robberies and iniquities of all kinds were repressed by the punishment or reformation of the criminals: and so exact was the general police, that ALFRED, it is said, hung up, by way of bravado, golden bracelets near the highways; and no man dared to touch them. Yet, amidst these rigors of justice, this great Prince preserved the most sacred regard to the liberty of his people; and it is a memorable sentiment preserved in

his will, THAT IT WAS JUST THE ENGLISH SHOULD FOR EVER REMAIN AS FREE AS THEIR OWN THOUGHTS.

"As good morals and knowledge are almost inseparable, in every age, though not in every individual, the care of ALFRED for the encouragement of learning among his subjects was another useful branch of his legislation, and tended to reclaim the English from their former dissolute and ferocious manners: but the King was guided in this pursuit, less by political views, than by his natural bent and propensity towards letters. When he came to the throne, he found the nation sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders in the government, and from the ravages of the Danes: the monasteries were destroyed; the monks butchered or dispersed; their libraries burned; and thus the only seats of erudition in those ages were totally subverted. ALFRED himself complains, that on his accession he knew not one person south of the Thames, who could so much as interpret the Latin service; and very few in the northern parts, who had even reached that pitch of erudition. But this Prince invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he established schools every where for the instruction of his people; he founded, at least repaired, the University of Oxford, and endowed it with many privileges, revenues, and immunities; he enjoined by law all freeholders, possessed of two hides of land or more*, to send their children to school for their instruction; he gave preferment both in church and state to such only as had made some proficiency in knowledge; and by all these expedients he had the satisfaction, before his death, to see a great

* A hide of land is supposed to have commonly contained above 100 acres.

change

change in the face of affairs; and in a work of his, which is still extant, he congratulates himself on the progress which learning, under his patronage, had already made in England.

"But the most effectual expedient, employed by ALFRED, for the encouragement of learning, was his own example, and the constant assiduity with which, notwithstanding the multiplicity and urgency of his affairs, he employed himself in the pursuits of knowledge. He usually divided his time into three equal portions: one was employed in sleep, and the refection of his body by diet and exercise; another in the dispatch of business; a third in study and devotion; and that he might more exactly measure the hours, he made use of burning tapers of equal length, which he fixed in lanthorns,—an expedient suited to that rude age, when the geometry of dialling, and the mechanism of clocks and watches, were totally unknown. And by such a regular distribution of his time, though he often labored under great bodily infirmities, this martial hero, who fought in person fifty-six battles by sea and land, was able, during a life of no extraordinary length, to acquire more knowlege, and even to compose more books, than most studious men, though blest with the greatest leisure and application, have, in more fortunate ages, made the object of their uninterrupted industry.

"Sensible that the people at all times, especially when their understandings are obstructed by ignorance and bad education, are not much susceptible of speculative instruction, ALFRED endeavoured to convey his morality by apologues, parables, stories, apophthegms, couched in poetry; and, besides propagating among his subjects former compositions of that kind, which he found in the Saxon tongue, he exercised his genius in inventing works of a like na-

ture, as well as in translating from the Greek the elegant Fables of Æsop. He also gave Saxon translations of OROSIUS's and BEDE's Histories; and of BOETHIUS concerning the Consolation of Philosophy. And he found it nowise derogatory from his other great characters of sovereign, legislator, and politician, thus to lead the way to his people in the pursuits of literature.

"Meanwhile, this Prince was not negligent in encouraging the vulgar and mechanical arts, which have a more sensible, though not a closer, connection with the interests of society. He invited, from all quarters, industrious foreigners to re-people his country, which had been desolated by the ravages of the Danes. He introduced and encouraged manufactures of all kinds; and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art did he suffer to go unrewarded. He prompted men of activity to betake themselves to navigation, to push commerce into the most remote countries, and to acquire riches by propagating industry among their fellow-citizens. He set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue for maintaining a number of workmen, whom he constantly employed in rebuilding the ruined cities, castles, palaces, and monasteries. Even the elegancies of life were brought to him from the Mediterranean and the Indies; and his subjects, by seeing those productions of the peaceful arts, were taught to respect the virtues of justice and industry, from which alone they could arise. Both living and dead, ALFRED was regarded by foreigners, no less than by his own subjects, as the greatest prince after CHARLEMAGNE, that had appeared in Europe during several ages, and as one of the wisest and best that ever adorned the annals of any nation."

CHARAC-

## CHARACTER OF KING JOHN:

### BY THE SAME HISTORIAN.

"The character of this Prince is nothing but a complication of vices, equally mean and odius; ruinous to himself, and destructive to his people. Cowardice, inactivity, folly, levity, and licentiousness, ingratitude, treachery, tyranny, and cruelty; all these qualities appear too evidently in the several instances of his life to give us room to suspect, that the disagreeable picture has been any wise overcharged by the prejudices of the ancient historians. It is hard to say, whether his conduct to his father, his brother, his nephew, or his subjects was most culpable; or whether his crimes in those respects were not even exceeded by the baseness, which appeared in his transactions with the king of France, the pope, and the barons. His dominions, when they devolved to him by the death of his brother, were more extensive than have ever, since his time, been ruled by any English monarch. But he first lost by his misconduct the flourishing provinces in France, the ancient patrimony of his family: he subjected his kingdom to a shameful vassalage under the see of Rome: he saw the prerogatives of his crown diminished by law, and still more reduced by faction: and he died at last, when in danger of being totally expelled by a foreign power, and of either ending his life miserably in prison, or seeking shelter as a fugitive from the pursuit of his enemies."

THE

THE

# BRITISH CICERO.

## PART THE SECOND.

## SPECIMENS OF PARLIAMENTARY ELOQUENCE.

### INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem unnecessary to enlarge on the advantages which young students in oratory must derive from selections of the most admired speeches in parliament. The annals of the world do not afford more brilliant proofs of the powers of human genius, and of the extent of the human understanding, than are to be found in the debates of the British senate. While flashes of wit, and bursts of eloquence warm, elevate, and transport the soul;—while we dwell with satisfied conviction on the ingenuity and evidence of irresistible reasoning;—we feel our minds expanded and enlightened by a display of learning, of knowledge, and wisdom, which render us independent of the boasted treasures of antiquity.

As a fund of valuable information, those debates embrace every subject of importance to civilized society,—the means of internal happiness and external security,—the navy,—the army,—foreign and domestic trade,—the various resources of the state,—distant settlements,—treaties,—subsidies,—constitutional questions,—religion,—morals,—and all the other cares and concerns of good government.

At

At the same time that the parliamentary debates afford so complete a system of the most liberal and enlightened policy, as well as a clear view of the rise and fall of empires, and of the steps by which men ascend to power or sink into insignificance, do they not also furnish ingenious youth with the finest models of eloquence, and a fixed standard of the purity of the English language? Are so many months and years in the early part of life to be spent in studying the *artificial harangues* of THUCYDIDES and ZENOPHON, of LIVY, TACITUS, and SALUST, while the *genuine speeches* of BRITISH SENATORS, unrivalled in the sphere of oratory, are disregarded? Were the present work to be attended with no other good effect than that of contributing to reform so gross an error in the fashionable systems of public and private education, we should think our humble labours very amply rewarded. How delightful would it be to fan the flame of rising genius, by putting the master pieces of English composition into the hands of our young countrymen,

"To whom the Wits of Greece and Rome are known,
"And ev'ry Speaker's merits—but their own!"

In our Universities, distinct schools are very properly appointed for teaching the several arts and sciences, one for Grammar, another for Rhetoric, a third for Logic, and so on. But in our great parliamentary school, all those are admirably united; and youth may here be instructed without the least confusion, in every thing that can benefit or adorn human nature. As to Grammar and Rhetoric, where can they be better studied than in the most impressive examples of propriety, elegance, copiousness, and energy; and with regard to the art of reasoning, the very forms observed in carrying a bill through both houses give rise to more striking illustrations of practical Logic than any writer on the subject was ever capable

even

even of conceiving. Every bill must be read, and is of course liable to be debated, at least three different times in each house, to prevent the legislative body from being taken by surprise, and to give time for viewing the question in every possible light. As the same arguments either for or against the bill are never repeated, we see in its progress the powers of ingenuity put to the fullest stretch, and the resources of fertile invention exhausted, to rise one above the other, like a majestic pile, whose towering summit seems to pierce the skies.

In the selection and arrangement of our materials, some pains have been taken to bring under the same general heads of national importance the various and even the contradictory opinions of the ablest orators and statesmen, as the light of truth is frequently struck out by the clash or collision of such opposite sentiments. Even where politicians, under the influence of passions, of prejudices, or mistake, have evidently differed in their anticipations of what would follow, it is easy now to see whether Time has put his seal or not to the accuracy of their prognostics.

In order to bring within the space of one volume as great a number of those oratorical beauties as possible, our constant endeavour has been to compress, but not to mutilate;—to preserve the spirit, while we retrench the dead letter;—and, by a just discrimination of style, to hit off the characteristical excellencies of the different speakers. We even hope, in some happy moments, to transport the reader into the scene of debate;—to make him see the lightning and hear the thunder of British eloquence;—to direct his eye to the brightest orbs in the political heavens, and to charm his ear with the music of our parliamentary spheres.

CHAP.

## CHAP. I.

### PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

THE purity and equality of the national representation are objects of such primary importance, that it is no wonder they should at all times have engaged the attention and excercised the talents of our greatest statesmen and patriots. Some have been of opinion that the best purposes of reform might be promoted by extending the right of suffrage, and others by abridging the duration of parliamets. The latter expedient appears to have been a very popular one ever since the Revolution. In the session of 1692, a bill was brought into the House of Lords by the EARL of SHREWSBURY for the frequent calling and meeting of parliaments; by which it was enacted, that a session of parliament should be held every year, and a new parliament summoned every third year; whence the bill was called the Triennial Bill. It passed the Lords by a great majority, and was well received by the commons, notwithstanding the opposition of the Courtiers. But King WILLIAM regarding it as a dangerous novelty, and a serious invasion of his prerogative, refused his assent. In four years after, he was better advised; and, on the 22d of December 1694, a similar bill received the royal sanction, to the great joy of the people, who regarded it as the most satisfactory security which had ever been obtained for the perpetuation of their rights and liberties.

In the year 1716, the ministry being apprehensive of the danger or inconvenience of a general election for some

time

time after the suppression of a rebellion, the parliament then sitting assumed a power of prolonging not only the duration of future parliaments, but even its own; and having been elected by the nation for three years, they elected themselves for four years more. This extraordinary measure is known by the name of the Septennial Act, which originated in the Lords, and was strenuously opposed there, but encountered a still more vehement and formidable opposition in the Commons, where the debate was closed by Sir ROBERT RAYMOND, (afterwards Lord Chief Justice RAYMOND) with the following reply to the most ingenious advocates for such a stretch of parliamentary authority:

"The arguments for the bill are, 1. The expences attending frequent elections: 2. The divisions and animosities excited by them: 3. The advantages to be derived by our enemies from these domestic feuds: 4. The encouragement which this bill holds out to our allies to form with us more strict and permanent connections.

"As to the expences of election, they have, I acknowledge, of late years, most alarmingly increased, and have become very grievous and burdensome. They have increased, however, not from the contests of neighbouring gentlemen with each other, but from the intrusion of strangers, who having no natural interest to support them, and coming no one could tell whence, had recourse to the scandalous arts of bribery and corruption, which imposed a necessity upon gentlemen to enlarge their expences, in order to preserve their ancient and established interests in their respective counties; and the impunity, which the practice of bribery and corruption has too often met with in this house, I am compelled to add, has greatly enhanced the evil. But will any one assert, that septennial

septennial parliaments are competent to remedy this evil? Will they not rather increase it? For those that will give money to obtain a seat in parliament for three years, will give proportionably more for seven. No—not septennial but annual parliaments are the true constitutional remedy for this grievance: this was our ancient constitution; and every departure from it has been attended with inconvenience and injury.

"With respect to the animosities and divisions attending frequent elections, they are chiefly of a private nature, and little affect the public: such as they are, however, this bill is more calculated to inflame than to extinguish them. But our most alarming and pernicious animosities proceed certainly from a very different source—from the resentment and ambition of some, from the folly and prejudice of others.

"That our enemies will take advantage of our divisions, whenever it is in their power, cannot be doubted; but, since the Triennial Act passed, ten successive parliaments have sat, two long and bloody wars have been waged, our factions ran high, and our enemies were vigilant; yet no such inconveniences were felt as are now apprehended or alleged: nor were any attempts made by them, as far as I have heard, to our prejudice, during the temporary ferments of those elections.

"The last argument is deduced from the encouragement this will give to your allies to enter into treaties with you. Sorry should I be to suppose we had any allies who refused to treat with us because we refused to relinquish our constitution. Were such a requisition to be made to them on our part, would it not be rejected on theirs with contempt and indignation? But the measure now proposed is calculated not to strengthen the hands of

the executive power, but to lessen its influence with foreign nations. Is it not to proclaim to the world, that the King *dare* not call a new parliament?—that he *dare* not trust the people in a new choice? And is this not a supposition dishonorable alike to the Monarch and to the Parliament now existing? It presumes that another House of Commons would act differently from the present; which implies that this House does not truly represent the people. Frequent parliaments are coeval with the constitution. In the reign of EDWARD III. it was enacted that parliaments should be holden every year once, and oftener if need be. This must be understood of new parliaments; for prorogations and long adjournments were not then known. Every long interruption of parliaments has been attended with mischief and inconvenience to the public: and in the Declaration of Rights at the Revolution it is asserted, as the undoubted right of the subject, that parliaments should be held frequently; and the preamble of the bill, which we are now called upon to repeal, declares, 'that, by the ancient laws and statutes of the realm, frequent parliaments ought to be held, and that frequent NEW parliaments tend very much to the happy union and the good agreement of the King and his people.' Before this repeal takes place, I hope it will be shewn in what consists the error of those assertions. Would the King establish his throne in the hearts of his people, this is the most sure and effectual way; for such frequent appeals to the people generate confidence; and confidence is a great advance towards agreement and affection. Will not the people say with reason, if this bill should pass, that, when the original term of delegation is elapsed, you are no longer their representations? In my opinion, with great submission I speak it, King, Lords, and Commons can no more con-

tinue a parliament beyond its natural duration, than they can make a parliament. The wisest governments, it is well known, have ever been the most cautious in continuing those persons in authority to whom they have intrusted the supreme power. A standing parliament and a standing army are convertible, and fit instruments to support each other's powers.

"For these reasons, and because no state necessity can be alleged or pretended for the passing of such an act, at a time when the present parliament may be convened for two succeeding sessions, I shall give my vote against the commitment of the bill."

The question of commitment, however, was carried in the affirmative by a majority of 284 against 162 voices.

The first vigorous attempt to obtain a repeal of the Septennial Act was made in 1734, when the debate on the subject was thus opened by Mr. WILLIAM BROMLEY, then member for Warwick:

Mr. SPEAKER,

"The call of the House being adjourned to a very remote day, upon a general opinion, which I hope is well founded, that no vote of credit will be proposed, I believe we can scarcely expect a fuller House than this day produces. There cannot, therefore, be a better opportunity for making a motion, which I apprehend to be of such a national concernment, that I have long wished it to be undertaken by some person better able to support it than myself: but I have this satisfaction, that what I am going to offer will so far speak for itself, as may supply any defects in my manner of laying it before you; and I cannot doubt the concurrence of this House; when it comes to be maturely considered.

"I believe

"I believe we are none of us unapprised of the dislike the people in general have always had to long parliaments; a dislike justly founded on reason and experience; long parliaments in former reigns having proved the unhappy cause of great calamities to this nation, and having been, at all times, declared an innovation upon our constitution. I am convinced there is no one that hears me, who does not believe the people thought themselves highly aggrieved by the Septennial Bill; that they even looked upon it as a dangerous infringement of their liberties, notwithstanding the cause alleged in the preamble to the act, which seemed at that time to carry some weight with it.

"That cause being happily removed, they desire to revert, as near as may be, to their ancient constitution; and surely there can never be a more favourable opportunity to effectuate it than at this juncture, when his Majesty, to the great joy of the kingdom, has been graciously pleased to declare his satisfaction, that the people are soon to have an opportunity of chusing a new representative. The present parliament draws near its dissolution. What can it do more for its own honor; how can it crown its many meritorious acts better, than by redressing a grievance, which a succeeding parliament may possibly have its reasons for not entering into?

"Frequent parliaments were early declared a fundamental part of our constitution. In the fourth of EDWARD III. an act passed for holding them once a year, or oftener, if there should be occasion: in the thirty-sixth year of the same reign that statute was confirmed. In that parliament *Magna Charta* and *Charta de Foresta* were confirmed, and several new privileges granted to the subject. Then comes the clause relating to parliaments, which sufficiently shews the intention and original institution of them was for the redress of grievances:—for the

 bill

bill enacts, That for the maintenance of the said articles and statutes, that is, the privileges before mentioned, and for redress of divers mischiefs and grievances which daily happen, a new parliament shall be held once every year, as at another time was ordained. The sixteenth of CHARLES II. recites, that, by the ancient laws and statutes, parliaments used to be held very often, and therefore enacts, that the sitting and holding of parliaments, shall not be intermitted or discontinued for more than three years.

"In the early days, when this prudent care was taken for frequent meetings of parliaments, the Crown was possessed of revenues, which made applications to the people for money (unless upon extraordinary emergencies) unnecessary. It therefore clearly appears, that redress of grievances, making salutary laws for the good of the community, and preserving the liberties of the people, by supporting a due balance between the power of the crown and the rights of the subject, were the main ends of calling parliaments. The power of calling, then, being the undoubted prerogative of the crown, it became necessary, for the safety of the subject, to oblige the crown to call them frequently. I must confess, a caution of this kind is no longer necessary, nor can it ever be, so long as we preserve to ourselves the power of granting money: the crown revenues being sunk, or wantonly granted away, the annual call for a supply must necessarily produce an annual meeting of parliament. But give me leave to observe, the grievance now complained of is of a very different nature. It is not founded on discontinuance of parliaments, but on a too long and dangerous continuance of one and the same parliament: a practice unheard of in former times, when prorogations were not known; for, when a parliament was annually called together for the

redress

redress of grievances, as soon as the business of the session was over, it was dissolved, and a new one called the next year for the same purpose; by which means the country had a proper check upon their representatives, and those who had appeared to be too much under the influence of the crown,—those who were too much attached to the minister, had less opportunity of injuring their country; the people had it more frequently in their power to shew a proper resentment, and remedy the evil, by sending others the next year in their places.

This matter seems fully explained by the sixteenth of CHARLES II. which does not only prevent discontinuance of parliaments, but wisely provides against the too long continuance of one and the same parliament, by enacting it into a law, that a new parliament shall be called once in three years, or oftener, if there be occasion. The Bill of Rights in the second session of WILLIAM and MARY, among many other privileges which we now enjoy, enacts, that for redress of grievances, amending, strengthening, and preserving laws, parliaments ought to be frequently held; and the sixth of the same reign explains the true meaning of the clause, when it declares, that frequent and new parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement between the King and the people: it confirms the 16 CAR. II. that parliaments shall be held once in three years, at least, and adds that no parliament shall continue more than three years, at farthest. Between that and the first of the late King, several parliaments were held, and none continued longer than three years: some held for one session; which seems to be the original constitution, and best calculated for the good of the nation. That year, the Septennial Bill passed, the repeal of which I am going to move; but believe it

more agreeable to the rules of the House, that the act itself should be first read." [*Here the Clerk read the act.*] "The preamble to the bill, which is the foundation of it, will, I think, admit a very easy answer. As to the first point, that triennial parliaments have proved more grievous, burdensome, and expensive, than they were ever known before that law passed, I readily agree; but let us consider the cause: the lengthening the term occasioned the expence. I fear I might add, the multiplicity of places enjoyed by the members of this House may be too justly alleged another cause. But I would willingly confine myself to the particular point, how far the term or duration of parliaments might increase or lessen the expence,—might add or diminish the grievance complained of? And I will consider it only in this light, by submitting it to every gentleman who hears me, whether he would not give more for an annuity of three years than for a grant determinable at the end of one; and by the same parity of reasoning, whether septennial parliaments must not prove more grievous, burdensome, and expensive than triennial, at least in such a degree as an annuity for seven years deserves a better consideration than one for three?

"But, supposing I should be out in this point, which I can never give up without due conviction, this argument in the preamble is, I hope, entirely at an end. The act against bribery and corruption, which must ever redound to the honor of this parliament, will necessarily remedy this evil: that glorious act will prevent corruption in the *electors*: nothing but frequent new parliaments can remedy it in the *elected*.

"The other reason upon which that act was founded, namely, a suspicion that designs were carrying on to renew the rebellion, and an invasion from abroad, was, in my

my humble opinion, the only justifiable pretence for enacting it into a law, and might possibly have induced some gentlemen of very great honor and integrity to give their votes for the bill, at that juncture, whose assistance, I flatter myself, I shall now have in repealing it; for those, who voted for it from that view could never intend it should be made perpetual, or that it should continue longer than that misfortune subsisted.

"I must beg pardon of you, Sir, and of the House, for the trouble I have given you. The nature of the motion I am going to make has unavoidably drawn me into a length as disagreeable to myself, as it must have been to those that hear me. Numberless arguments will occur to every gentleman in favour of it. I will therefore conclude with this motion, viz.

"That leave be given to bring in a bill for repealing the Septennial Act, and for the more frequent meeting and calling of parliaments.

"In this, Sir, I hope I shall be justified, as it cannot proceed from any indirect or private views, but from a real conviction that the happiness and safety of this nation depend upon it; in which I am supported by the common voice of the people, and have it particularly recommended to me by a great majority of those I have the honor to represent in parliament, as well as from my neighbours of the city of Coventry, for whose recommendation I shall always have a due regard, though I have not the honor to represent them."

The motion was thus seconded by Sir John St. Aubyn:

"Mr. Speaker,

"The honorable gentleman, who made you this motion, has supported the necessity of it by so many strong

and

and forcible arguments, that there is hardly any thing new to be offered. I am very sensible therefore of the disadvantage I must lie under, in attempting to speak after him; and I should content myself with barely seconding him, if the subject matter of this debate was not of such great importance, that I should be ashamed to return to my Electors, without endeavouring, in the best manner I am able, to declare publicly the reasons which induced me to give my most ready assent to the question.

"'Tis evident from what has been said, that the people have an unquestionable right to frequent new parliaments by ancient usage; and that this usage has been confirmed by several laws, which have been progressively made by our ancestors, as often as they found it necessary to insist on this essential privilege.

"Parliaments were generally annual, but never continued longer than three years, till the remarkable reign of HENRY VIII. He was a prince of unruly appetites, and of an arbitrary will: he was impatient of every restraint: the laws of God and man fell equally a sacrifice, as they stood in the way of his avarice, or disappointed his ambition: he therefore introduced long parliaments, because he very well knew that they would become the proper instruments of both; and what a slavish obedience they paid to all his measures is sufficiently known.

"If we come to the reign of King CHARLES I. we must acknowledge him to be a prince of a contrary temper: he had certainly an innate love for religion and virtue. But here lay the misfortune—he was led away from his natural disposition by sycophants and flatterers: they advised him to neglect the calling of frequent parliaments; and therefore, by not taking the constant sense of his people in what he did, he was worked up into so high a notion of prerogative, that the Commons (in order to restrain

strain it) obtained that independent fatal power, which at last unhappily brought him to his most tragical end, and at the same time subverted the whole constitution. And I hope we shall learn this lesson from it, never to compliment the crown with any new or extravagant powers, nor to deny the people those rights, which by ancient usage they are entitled to; but to preserve that just and equal balance, from which they will both derive mutual security, and which, if duly observed, will render our constitution the envy and admiration of the world.

"King CHARLES II. naturally took a surfeit of parliaments in his father's time, and was therefore extremely desirous to lay them aside. But this was a scheme impracticable. However, in effect he did so; for he obtained a parliament, which, by its long duration, like an army of veterans, became so exactly disciplined to his own measures, that they knew no other command but from that person who gave them their pay.

"This was a safe and most ingenious way of enslaving a nation. It was very well known that arbitrary power, if it was open and avowed, would never prevail here. The people were therefore amused with the specious forms of their ancient constitution: it existed, indeed, in their fancy; but, like a mere phantom, had no substance nor reality in it; for the power, the authority, and the dignity of parliaments were wholly lost. This was that remarkable parliament which so justly obtained the opprobrious name of the PENSION PARLIAMENT; and was the model, from which, I believe, some later parliaments have been actually copied.

"At the Time of the Revolution, the people made a fresh claim of their ancient privileges; and as they had so lately experienced the misfortune of long and servile Parliaments, it was then declared that they should be held frequently.

frequently. But it seems their full meaning was not understood by this declaration: and therefore, as in every new settlement the intention of all parties should be specifically manifested, the Parliament never ceased struggling with the crown, till the triennial law was obtained: the preamble of it is extremely full and strong; and in the body of the bill you will find the word *declared* before *enacted;* by which I apprehend, that though this law did not immediately take place at the time of the Revolution, it was certainly intended as declaratory of their first meaning: and therefore stands a part of that original contract, under which the constitution was then settled. His Majesty's title to the Crown is primarily derived from that contract; and if, upon a review, there shall appear to be any deviations from it, we ought to treat them as so many injuries done to that title.—And I dare say, that this House, which has gone through so long a series of services to his Majesty, will at last be willing to revert to those original stated measures of government, to renew, and strengthen that title. But, Sir, I think the manner in which the septennial law was first introduced, is a very strong reason why it should be repealed. People in their fears have very often recourse to desperate expedients, which, if not cancelled in season, will themselves prove fatal to that constitution, which they were meant to secure. Such is the nature of the septennial law; it was intended only as a preservative against a temporary inconvenience: the inconvenience is removed, but the mischievous effects still continue: for it not only altered the constitution of Parliament: but it extended that same Parliament beyond its natural duration: and therefore carries this unjust implication with it, that you may at any time usurp the most indubitable, the most essential privilege of the people—I mean that of choosing their own represent-

representatives.—A precedent of such a dangerous consequence, of so fatal a tendency, that I think it would be a reproach to our statute book if that law were any longer to subsist which might record it to posterity.

"This is a season of virtue, and public spirit. Let us take advantage of it, to repeal those laws which infringe our liberties, and introduce such, as may restore the vigor of our ancient constitution.

"Human nature is so very corrupt, that all obligations lose their force unless they are frequently renewed.—Long Parliaments give the minister an opportunity of getting acquaintance with members, of practising his several arts to win them into his schemes—This must be the work of time—Corruption is of so base a nature, that at first sight it is extremely shocking—Hardly any one has submitted to it all at once—His disposition must be previously understood—The particular bait must be found out, with which he is to be allured; and, after all, it is not without many struggles that he surrenders his virtue.—Indeed there are some, who will at once plunge themselves into any base actions: but the generality of mankind are of a more cautious nature, and will proceed only by leisurely degrees. One or two perhaps have deserted their colours the first campaign: some have done it a second—But a great many, who have not that eager disposition to vice, will wait a third—For this reason, short Parliaments have been less corrupt than long ones: they are observed, like streams of water, always to grow more impure, the greater distance they run from the fountain head.

"I am aware it may be said, that frequent new Parliaments will produce frequent new expences: but I think quite the contrary: I am really of opinion, that it will be a proper remedy against the evil of bribery at elections; especially

especially as you have provided so wholesome a law to co-operate upon these occasions. Bribery at elections whence did it arise? not from country gentlemen, for they are sure of being chosen without it: it was, Sir, the invention of wicked and corrupt ministers, who have from time to time led weak princes into such destructive measures, that they did not dare to rely upon the natural representation of the people. Long Parliaments, Sir, first introduced bribery; because they were worth purchasing at any rate. Country gentlemen, who have only their private fortunes to rely upon, and have no mercenary ends to serve, are unable to oppose it, especially if at any time, the public treasure shall be unfaithfully squandered away to corrupt their boroughs. Country gentlemen, indeed, may make some weak efforts: but as they generally prove unsuccessful, and the time of a fresh struggle is at so great a distance, they at last grow faint in the dispute—give up their country for lost, and retire in despair. Despair naturally produces indolence, and that is the proper disposition for slavery. Ministers of State understand this very well, and are therefore unwilling to awaken the nation out of its lethargy by frequent elections. They know that the spirit of liberty, like every other virtue of the mind, is to be kept alive only by constant action: that it is impossible to enslave this nation while it is perpetually upon its guard. Let country gentlemen, then, by having frequent opportunities of exerting themselves, be kept warm and active in their contention for the public good: this will raise that zeal, and spirit, which will at last get the better of those undue influences, by which the officers of the crown, though unknown to several boroughs, have been able to supplant country gentlemen of great characters, and fortune, who live in their neighbourhood. I do not say this upon idle speculation only. I live in a country where it is too

well known: and I appeal to many gentlemen in the House, to more out of it, (and who are so for this very reason) for the truth of my assertion.—Sir, it is a sore which has long been eating into the most vital part of our constitution: and I hope the time will come, when you will probe it to the bottom. For if a Minister should ever gain a corrupt familiarity with our boroughs: if he should keep a register of them in his closet, and by sending down his treasury mandates, should procure a spurious representation of the people, the offspring of his corruption, who will be at all times ready to reconcile and justify the most contradictory measures of his administration: and even to vote every crude indigested dream of their patron into a law: if the maintenance of his power should become the sole object of their attention, and they should be guilty of the most violent breach of parliamentary trust, by giving the King a discretionary power of taxing the people without limitation, or control: the last fatal compliment they can pay to the crown: if this should ever be the unhappy condition of this nation: the people indeed may complain: but the doors of that place, where their complaints should be heard will for ever be shut against them. Our disease, I fear, is of a complicated nature: and I think that this motion is wisely intended to remove the first and principal disorder. Give the people their ancient right of frequent new elections: that will restore the decayed authority of Parliaments, and will put our constitution into a natural condition of working out her own cure.

"Sir, upon the whole, I am of opinion, that I cannot express a greater zeal for his Majesty, for the liberties of the people, or the honor and dignity of this House, than by seconding the motion which the honorable gentleman has made you."

A long

A long debate ensued in which several of the ablest speakers distinguished themselves, particularly Sir WILLIAM WYNDHAM, who made a very strong, though not decisive, impression upon the House, by the following burst of descriptive eloquence.

"I have been told, Sir, that no faith is to be given to prophecies: therefore I shall not pretend to prophesy: but I may suppose a case, which, though it has not yet happened, may possibly happen. Let us then suppose a man of mean fortune, and obscure origin, abandoned to all notions of virtue, and honor, and pursuing no object but his own aggrandizement, raised by the caprice of fortune to the station of first minister: let us suppose him palpably deficient in the knowledge of the interests of his country: and employing in all transactions with foreign powers, men still more ignorant than himself: let us suppose the honor of the nation tarnished: her political consequence lost: her commerce insulted: her merchants plundered: her seamen perishing in the depths of dungeons, and all these circumstances palliated or overlooked lest his administration should be endangered: suppose him possessed of immense wealth, the spoils of an impoverished nation: and suppose this wealth employed to purchase seats in the national senate for his confidential friends, and favorites. In such a Parliament suppose all attempts to enquire into his conduct constantly over-ruled by a corrupt majority, who are rewarded for their treachery to the public by a profuse distribution of pensions, posts, and places under the Minister: Let us suppose this Minister insolently domineering over all men of sense, figure, and fortune in the nation: and having no virtuous principle of his own, ridiculing it in others, and endeavouring to destroy, or contaminate it in all: With such

7 a Minister,

a Minister, and such a Parliament, let us suppose a Prince upon the throne, uninformed, and unacquainted with the interests, or inclinations of his people, weak, capricious, and actuated at once by the passions of ambition, and avarice. Should such a case ever occur, could any greater curse happen to a nation, than such a Prince, advised by such a Minister, and that Minister supported by such a Parliament? The existence of such a Prince, and such a Minister no human laws may indeed be adequate to prevent: but the existence of such a Parliament may and ought to be prevented; and the repeal of the law in question I conceive to be a most obvious, necessary, and indispensable means for the accomplishment of that purpose."

Much ingenuity was also displayed by Mr. PULTENEY, Mr. PELHAM, and other gentlemen on both sides of the question; after which the debate was closed by Sir ROBERT WALPOLE, the introductory part of whose reply was thus pointed at Sir WILLIAM WYNDHAM's stinging suppositions:

"SIR,

"I do assure you, I did not intend to have troubled you in this debate; but such incidents now generally happen towards the end of our debates, nothing at all relating to the subject, and gentlemen make such suppositions, meaning some person, or perhaps as they say no person now *existing*, and talk so much of wicked ministers, domineering ministers, ministers pluming themselves in defiances, which terms and the like have been so much of late made use of in this House, that if they really mean nobody either in the House, or out of it, yet it must be supposed, they at least mean to call upon some gentleman in this House to make them a reply, and therefore I hope, I may be allowed to draw a picture in my turn—and I may like-

wise say, that I do not mean to give a description of any person now in being.—When gentlemen talk of ministers abandoned to all sense of virtue, or honor, other gentlemen may, I am sure, with equal justice and, I think, more justly speak of anti-ministers and mock-patriots, who never had either virtue or honor, but in the whole course of their opposition are actuated only by motives of envy, and of resentment against those who may have disappointed them in their views, or may not perhaps have complied with all their desires. But now, Sir, let me too suppose, and the House being cleared, I am sure no person that hears me can come within the description of the person, I am to suppose—let us suppose in this, or some other unfortunate country, an anti-minister, who thinks himself a person of so great, and extensive parts, and of so many eminent qualifications, that he looks upon himself as the only person in the kingdom capable to conduct the public affairs of the nation, and therefore christening every other gentleman, who has the honor to be employed in the administration, by the name of blunderer: suppose this fine gentleman lucky enough to have gained over to his party some persons really of fine parts—of ancient families—and of great fortunes, and others of desperate views, arising from disappointed and malicious hearts: all these gentlemen, with respect to their political behaviour, moved by him, and by him solely: all they say either in private, or in public, being only a repetition of the words he has put into their mouths; and a spitting out of that venom which he has infused into them: and yet we may suppose this leader not really liked by any, even of those who so blindly follow him, and hated by all the rest of mankind: We'll suppose this anti-minister to be in a country where he really ought not to be, and where he could not have been, but by an effect of too much goodness, and mercy: yet

endeavouring with all his might and with all his art to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed: in that country suppose him continually contracting friendships, and familiarities with the ambassadors of those Princes, who at the time happen to be most at enmity with his own. And if at any time it should happen to be for the interest of any of those foreign ministers to have a secret divulged to them, which might be highly prejudicial to his native country—as well as to all its friends: suppose this foreign minister applying to him, and he answering him, I'll get it you, tell me, but what you want, I'll endeavour to procure it for you. Upon this he puts a speech or two in the mouth of some of his creatures, or some of his new converts: what he wants is moved for in Parliament; and when so very reasonable a request as this is refused, suppose him and his creatures and tools, by his advice, spreading alarm over the whole nation, and crying out, Gentlemen, our country is at present involved in many dangerous difficulties, all which we would have extricated you from, but a wicked minister, and a corrupt majority, refused us the proper materials; and upon this scandalous victory, this minister became so insolent as to plume himself in defiances. Let us farther suppose this anti-minister to have travelled, and at every court where he was, thinking himself the greatest Minister, and making it his trade to betray the secrets of every court where he had before been; void of all faith or honor, and betraying every master he had ever served. Sir, I could carry my suppositions a great deal farther; and, I may say, I mean no person now in being: but if we can suppose such a one, can there be imagined a greater disgrace to human nature than such a wretch as this? Now, Sir, to be serious, and to talk really to the subject in hand. Though the question has already been so fully opposed, that there

is no great occasion to say any thing farther against it: yet, I hope, the House will indulge me in the liberty of giving some of those reasons which induce me to be against the motion. In general, I must take notice, that the nature of our constitution seems to be very much mistaken by the gentlemen who have spoken in favor of this motion. It is certain that ours is a mixed government, and the perfection of our constitution consists in this: that the monarchical, the aristocratical, and democratical forms of government are mixed, and interwoven in ours, so as to give us all the *advantages* of each, without subjecting us to the dangers, and inconveniences of either.—The democratical form of government, which is the only one I have now occasion to take notice of, is liable to these inconveniences: that they are generally too tedious in their coming to any resolution: and seldom brisk and expeditious enough in carrying their resolutions into execution: that they are always wavering in their resolutions; and never steady in the measures they resolve to pursue: and that they are often involved in factions, seditions, and insurrections, which expose them to be made the tools, if not the prey of their neighbours: therefore in all the regulations we make with respect to our constitution, we are to guard against running too much into that form of government, which is properly called democratical: this was in my opinion the effect of the triennial law: and will again be the effect, if ever it should be restored.

"That triennial Elections would make our government too tedious in all their resolves, is evident: because in such case no prudent administration would ever resolve upon any measure of consequence till they had felt not only the pulse of the parliament, but the pulse of the people: and the ministers of state would always labor under

under this disadvantage, that as secrets of state must not be immediately divulged, their enemies (and enemies they will always have) would have a handle for exposing their measures, and rendering them disagreeable to the people, and thereby carrying perhaps a new election against them, before they could have an opportunity of justifying their measures, by divulging those facts, and circumstances, from whence the justice, and wisdom of their measures would clearly appear.

"Then, Sir, it is by experience well known, that what is called the populace of every country, are apt to be too much elated with success, and too much dejected with every misfortune: this makes them wavering in their opinion about affairs of the state: and never long in the same mind: and as this House is chosen by the free and unbiassed voice of the people in general, if this choice were so often renewed, we might expect that this House would be as wavering and unsteady as the people usually are: and it being impossible to carry on the public affairs of the nation without the concurrence of this House, the ministers would always be obliged to comply, and consequently would be obliged to change their measures as often as the people changed their minds.

"With septennial Parliaments, Sir, we are not exposed to either of these misfortunes, because if the ministers, after having felt the pulse of the Parliament, which they can always soon do, resolve upon any measures, they have generally time enough, before the new election comes on, to give the people proper information in order to shew them the *justice*, and the wisdom of the measures they have pursued: and if the people should at any time be too much elated, or too much dejected, or should without a cause change their minds, those at the helm of affairs have time to set them right before a new election comes on.

 "As

"As to faction and sedition, Sir, I will grant that in monarchical and aristocratical governments it generally arises from violence, and oppression: but in democratical governments it always arises from the people's having too great a share in the government: for in all countries, and in all governments, there will always be many factious and unquiet spirits, who can never be at rest either *in* power, or *out of* power: when *in* power they are never easy, unless every man submits entirely to their direction: and when *out of* power, they are always working and intriguing against those that are *in*, without any regard to justice, or the interests of their country: in popular governments such men have too much game; they have too many opportunities for working upon, and corrupting the minds of the people: in order to give them a bad impression of, and to raise discontents against those that have the management of the public affairs for the time: and these discontents often break out into seditions, and insurrections.

"This, Sir, in my opinion, would be our misfortune, if our Parliaments were either annual or triennial: by such frequent elections there would be so much power thrown into the hands of the people: as would destroy that equal mixture which is the beauty of our constitution: in short our government would really become a democratical government, and might thence very probably diverge into a tyrannical. Therefore, in order to preserve our constitution, in order to prevent our falling into tyranny, and arbitrary power, we ought to preserve that law, which, I really think, has brought our constitution to a more equal mixture, and consequently to greater perfection than it was ever in, before that law took place.

"As to bribery, and corruption, Sir, if it was possible to influence by such base means the majority of the electors

electors of Great Britain, to choose such men as would probably give up their liberties: if it were possible to influence by such means a majority of the members of this House to consent to the establishment of arbitrary power, I would readily allow that the calculations made by the gentlemen of the other side were just: and their influence true: but I am persuaded that neither of these is possible. As the members of this House generally are, and must always be gentlemen of fortune and figure in their country, is it possible to suppose that any of them could by a pension, or a post, be influenced to consent to the overthrow of our constitution, by which the enjoyment not only of what he got, but of what he before had, would be rendered altogether precarious? I will allow, Sir, that, with respect to bribery, the price must be higher, or lower generally in proportion to the virtue of the man who is to be bribed; but it must likewise be granted, that the humor he happens to be in at the time, the spirit he happens to be endowed with, adds a great deal to his virtue. When no encroachments are made upon the rights of the people, when the people do not think themselves in any danger, there may be many of the electors who by a bribe of ten guineas might be induced to vote for one candidate rather than another; but if the court were making any encroachments upon the rights of the people, a proper spirit would without doubt arise in the nation, and in such a case I am persuaded, that none, or very few even of such electors, could be induced to vote, for a court candidate, no, not for ten times the sum.

"There may, Sir, be some bribery, and corruption in the nation: I am afraid there always will be some; but it is no proof of it that strangers are sometimes chosen: for a gentleman may have so much natural influence over a borough in his neighbourhood, as to be able to prevail

with them to choose any person he pleases to recommend; and if, upon such recommendation, they choose one or two of his friends who are perhaps strangers to them, it is not thence to be inferred that the two strangers were chosen their representatives by the means of bribery and corruption.

"To insinuate, Sir, that money may be issued from the public treasury for bribing elections, is really something very extraordinary, especially in those gentlemen who know how many checks are upon every shilling that can be issued from thence: and how regularly the money granted in one year for the public service of the nation must always be accounted for the very next session in this House, and likewise in the other, if they have a mind to call for any such account. And as to the gentlemen in offices, if they have any advantage over country gentlemen in having something else to depend upon besides their own private fortunes, they have likewise many disadvantages: they are obliged to live at London with their families, by which they are put to a much greater expense than gentlemen of equal fortune who live in the country—this lays them under a very great disadvantage with respect to the supporting their interest in the country. The country gentleman, by living among the electors, and purchasing the necessaries for his family from them, keeps up an acquaintance, and correspondence with them, without putting himself to any extraordinary charge, whereas a gentleman who lives in London, has no other way of keeping up an acquaintance or correspondence among his friends in the country, but by going down once or twice a year at a very extraordinary charge, and often without any other business; so that we may conclude a gentleman in office, cannot, even in seven years, save much for distributing in ready money at the time of an election;

election; and I really believe, if the fact were narrowly inquired into, it would appear that the gentlemen in office are as little guilty of bribing their electors with ready money, as any other set of gentlemen in the kingdom.

"That there are ferments often raising among the people without any just cause, is what I am surprised to hear controverted, since very late experience may convince us of the contrary. Do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation towards the latter end of the late Queen's reign? And it is well known what a fatal change in the affairs of this nation was introduced, or at least confirmed by an election's coming on while the nation was in that ferment? Do not we know what a ferment was raised in the nation soon after his late Majesty's accession? And if an election had then been allowed to come on, while the nation was in that ferment, it might perhaps have had as fatal effects as the former: but, thank God, this was wisely provided against by the very law which is now wanted to be repealed. As such ferments may hereafter often happen, I must think that frequent elections will always be dangerous; for which reason, as far as I can see at present, I shall, I believe, at all times think it a very dangerous experiment to repeal the septennial bill.

The question being then put upon Mr. BROMLEY's motion, it passed in the negative by 247 to 184.

Towards the close of the year 1744, the resignation of Lord CARTERET led to a coalition between the PELHAMS and the popular leaders in both houses; at which some of the old adherents of the latter were much offended; and one of them, Mr. CAREW, took an early opportunity, in January 1745, to put to the test, as he called it, the patriotism of the new ministers, by bringing forward a



measure

measure for which they had before expressed the greatest zeal—He introduced his motion with a speech nearly to the following purport:

"From the compromise that happened about the beginning of this session, and the great things that were said to be stipulated, by those who were then come into power, it might have been expected, that the motion I am to conclude with would have come from another quarter, and that a bill for that purpose would have, long before now, been passed into a law. Whether our new ministers and quondam patriots did really stipulate any thing in favor of their country, or in favor of that cause they seemed to glory in espousing, I do not know; but, from what has hitherto appeared, they seem to have stipulated nothing, but places for themselves. Whatever may be in this, I am resolved to put them to the trial: and from the fate of the question I am to propose, I shall determine, whether our present new ministers deserve all the hard names they have themselves so liberally bestowed upon those they have now supplanted, as well as the hard names they formerly lavished upon those they have now joined with. These hard names they must not expect to evade, by giving a simple vote for this question, or any question of the like nature: the world is now too clear-sighted to be imposed on by such gross dissimulation: the question must be carried, and effectually carried, or otherwise, they ought to throw up the places they have so rashly accepted, and declare against those, with whom they lately so rashly united. I say rashly, Sir, for if they are not resolved to desert the cause of liberty, I must say it was rash in them to unite with those who have for so many years declared against it, without some very particular and express stipulations in favor of the liberties of their country. What may now be the way of thinking with some gentlemen amongst us, about the

liberties

liberties of their country, I shall not pretend to determine, Sir: but if people's way of thinking can be learned from their speeches and declarations, I am very certain that their former way of thinking was, that the liberties of this country could not be preserved, unless some proper methods should speedily be taken for preventing the effect of ministerial corruption, both in Parliament and at elections: and that the most proper, and effectual method for this purpose was to make elections as frequent as possible. This, I am sure, was formerly their way of thinking: I hope it is so still: but whether it is so or not, it is a right way of thinking, and therefore I shall conclude what I have now to say, with a motion for returning to our ancient method of having a new Parliament every year chosen. That this ancient constitution cannot be disputed because it is so expressly declared by two acts of Parliament in EDWARD III's reign, that a Parliament shall be annually holden: and every one knows that long prorogations, or adjournments were not then introduced, or known: so that the meaning of both these laws must be, that a Parliament should be every year chosen as well as held, which is the opinion of all those who have wrote upon the subject; and if we consider the nature and business of this Assembly, it is certainly agreeable to reason it should be so.

"The members of this House, Sir, are the great and general inquisitors of the nation: we are to take notice of, and to take proper methods for redressing all the grievances that occur, whether they be such as relate to the kingdom in general, or such as relate to the particular counties, cities, or boroughs we represent. Now as grievances are almost annually occurring, and as some grievances are the more difficult to be removed the longer they continue; therefore it is necessary we should visit our

our constituents, at least, once a year, to know their sentiments, and to examine upon the spot the grievances they complain of: but this is not to be expected unless you make the elections annual: for we find by experience, that after gentlemen are once chosen for a long term of years, they fix their abode in this city, and seldom revisit their constituents till it becomes necessary for them to go down to solicit their votes at a new election. Nay, since the establishment of septennial Parliaments, we have often had gentlemen in this House, who never saw the borough that sent them hither; nor knew any thing of its constitution, or interest: perhaps could not recollect its name, till they looked into the printed lists of Parliament for their own name, and there found they represented such a Borough. Another part of our business, Sir, is to represent to our Sovereign, the sentiments of our constituents, with regard to the measures he is advised by his ministers to pursue, as well as with regard to the persons he employs in the executive part of the government. If we ever think of doing this faithfully, and sincerely, we must visit our constituents at least once a year, because every year produces some new measure, and every year some new persons are introduced into public business. This, I say, is another part of our duty; and when it is faithfully or sincerely performed, it is of great advantage to the Prince upon the throne, because it prevents his being led on in a track of unpopular measures, till both he and his ministers are overwhelmed in the torrent of popular resentment, which often happens in arbitrary countries, where the Prince is tumbled headlong from his throne, before he knows any thing of his having pursued unpopular or wrong measures; whereas, had he had timely information, he might have restored himself to the love, and affection of his subjects, by making a just sacrifice of

of his wicked counsellors to the resentment of his oppressed people. As the Prince can have no interest separate from his people, his interest, if he rightly considers it, must lead him to gain the love and esteem of his people; and to avoid every thing that may give them discontent: it is therefore his interest to have always an House of Commons that knows, and will faithfully and speedily represent to him the complaints and grievances of his people: but this is directly opposite to the interest of his ministers. In all countries, and in this as much as any other, ministers have an interest separate from that of the people: they are for enriching themselves, their families, tools, and sycophants, at the expense of the people: and it is their business to keep all the avenues to the throne shut up against the complaints of the people, lest the Prince should, as every wise one will, sacrifice them to his own security: ministers must therefore be for having always an House of Commons, that either does not know, or will not faithfully represent to their Sovereign the complaints and grievances of the people; and as we are much more affected with what we see, than what we only hear of, it is the business of a minister to prevent the members of this House, if possible, from ever seeing their constituents, because the less we are affected with, the more easily we may be prevailed on, to conceal from our Sovereign, or even to misrepresent to him, the complaints of the people. Thus, Sir, it is apparently the interest of the King, it is apparently the interest of the country, to have short Parliaments, and frequent general elections—but it is apparently the interest of ministers, especially wicked ministers, to have parliaments as long, and general elections as seldom as possible; therefore I hope it will be granted, that annual Parliaments are more agreeable to the reason of things, and the nature of our consti-

constitution than Parliaments of any longer duration; and of this we must be convinced even to demonstration, if we will but consider, that we are, properly speaking, the attorneys of the people. Is it prudent, is it reasonable, that any man should have a power of attorney irrevocable for a long term of years? shall a whole people do what would be the height of foolishness in every individual? The people, or at least such of them as have any knowledge of public affairs, and by such the rest are generally governed; I say the people may guess at what sort of business is to come before the next ensuing session of Parliament, and they may choose an attorney, who they think has capacity and integrity enough for transacting that sort of business for them: but they cannot so much as guess at what may come before Parliament in a course of seven years, nor can they depend upon the continuance of any man's integrity for such a number of years. It is therefore most unnatural and unreasonable to force the people to give an irrevocable power of attorney for such a long term. The practice was first introduced under the reign of RICHARD II., and was approved of by a Parliament, that in every instance betrayed the liberties of the people they represented, and sacrificed the interest of their country to the violent passions of their Sovereign, and the insatiable avarice of his ministers.—They concealed from him, or misrepresented the discontents and murmurings of his people; and thereby led him into a deceitful security, which soon ended in his ruin, and the advancement of the Duke of HEREFORD, or rather LANCASTER to the throne, without any other title than that of having rescued the people from slavery.

" This, Sir, was the fate of the Prince who first introduced long parliaments; and therefore from experience, as well as reason, we may be convinced, that short

short Parliaments and frequent general elections, are most for the interest of the King: but unluckily the interest of ministers lies, as I have said, upon the other side of the question, not only for the sake of preventing the members of this House from being affected with the cries, and groans of the people, but for another reason, which is still more effectual for their wicked purposes: I mean that of corruption. From the very principle adopted by all wicked ministers, that every man has his price, it is evident to a demonstration that ministerial corruption may be more successful at elections when they are but rarely to happen, than when they occur annually; and that a minister may more probably obtain a corrupt majority in a long Parliament, than a short one. To draw the comparison between annual, and septennial parliaments; and first with regard to elections, in every county, in every little borough of the kingdom it must be granted, that there are some gentlemen who have a natural interest —they are acquainted with and esteemed by the leading men in the county, or borough; and many of the lower class perhaps support their families by the employment they have from such gentlemen, and their friends—If elections were allowed to go in their natural course, such men only would be chosen, who had the greatest natural interest but against such an one a Court-candidate, with the Treasury at his back, comes to set up, and to set up upon the ministerial principle, that every man has his price;—which for argument's sake, I shall allow to be a true one; and I am sorry it has of late years been so much confirmed by experience. Suppose then, that every one of the electors in this county or borough has his price: yet surely it will not be pretended that all have an equal price, or that a man in tolerable circumstances will sacrifice his Country, his friend, and his character, or

or a tradesman his employment, for what appears to him to be a trifle. We must therefore suppose, that a man, whose price is seven guineas, will not sell his vote for one, nor will a man, whose price is seven hundred, sell his vote for one hundred. Now suppose the Treasury could secure a majority in this borough for seven guineas a man; this they may spare to give for a seven year's Parliament, but cannot spare to give so much every year: therefore, in annual Parliaments, this borough will return to, and be governed in its election by what we call the natural interest, whereas in septennial Parliaments it will always be governed by corruption.

"I know it may be said, Sir, that a man who sells his vote for seven guineas to a septennial Parliament candidate, will sell it for one to an annual Parliament candidate; because he knows he may sell it for the same price yearly; and an annuity of one guinea yearly is better than seven guineas every seven years: but this I am convinced will by experience be found to be false. It is the largeness of the sum that dazzles both the avaricious and luxurious, who seldom think of futurity; if they did, they would never sell their vote at any price; because they know that they who purchase must sell: and that by selling their votes they render not only their liberties, but their properties precarious.—Besides, no man can be sure of having an opportunity to sell his vote the next ensuing year; and much less can he be sure of selling it yearly for seven years to come: he may die before the next election: the Administration may be changed; and a new one set up that does not stand in need of corruption: a spirit may arise in his borough that may render it impossible for any man to hope for success by corruption: and without hope of success no man will be at the expense

pence of corrupting: many other accidents may happen for disappointing him of ever having another opportunity to sell his vote at an election: and if so, for the sake of one guinea, or some such paltry sum, he stands branded as long as he lives with the character of an infamous venal betrayer of his country.—I therefore think we may with great certainty conclude, that though a man may be tempted to sell his vote for seven guineas to a septennial Parliament candidate, he will disdain to sell his vote for one guinea to an annual parliament candidate, and consequently that it is much easier for a minister to get the command of a majority of our elections, when they recur but once in seven years, than it would be, if they were made to recur annually.

Now, Sir, with regard to Parliaments, by the same way of arguing, we must be convinced, that it is easier for a minister to gain a corrupt majority in a septennial, than in an annual Parliament. Here again it must be allowed, that different men have different prices; and that a man who sells his vote in Parliament for 7000 *l.* or even for 3500 *l.* would disdain to sell his vote for 1000 *l.* Suppose then a minister should not trouble his head with elections, but trust as a late minister wantonly said, to the buying of the members after they were brought up to market; and that by this means a majority had been chosen upon the country Interest: in these circumstances the minister must presently apply himself towards buying off such a number of that majority, as may be necessary to throw the majority upon his side of the question: and is it not evident, that in this attempt he may more probably succeed in a septennial, than in an annual Parliament? In the former if he offers a pension of 1000 *l.* or 500 *l.* a year as long as the gentleman continues a member,

 it

it is immediately considered as a sum of 7000*l.* or 3500*l.* to be paid in seven years: but in the latter it can be considered only as a single 1000*l.* or 500*l.*, because the gentleman who accepted it, and upon that account deserted the interest on which he was chosen, would certainly be thrown out upon the next general election. The minister's success would therefore be evidently more precarious in the latter than in the former case; and the precariousness of his success would add to the difficulty of his attempt; because it would make gentlemen more shy than they otherwise would be to accept of any offers he could make.

"Thus I think, Sir, it is evident, that ministerial corruption may be more prevalent in a septennial Parliament than it could be, were our parliaments annually chosen; and the mischief is, besides many others, that corruption within doors spreads corruption without.—When a gentleman finds he can get 500*l.* or 1000*l.* a year for his vote in Parliament, he thinks no more of improving or preserving his natural Interest in his borough: he trusts to corruption alone for his next election; and the pension, or salary he has from the public, enables him to outbid any gentleman who sets up upon the country interest, and has nothing but his own private fortune for supporting his expence. To this I shall add, Sir, that corruption within doors contributes not a little towards the success of ministerial corruption without. When a gentleman of family and fortune gets into Parliament, let him vote there in never so abandoned a manner, he will still preserve some natural interest in that part of the country where his family has, perhaps for ages, lived in great esteem; this natural interest is of course brought in aid of ministerial corruption, at all the elections in that country: and

and against these two joined together it requires a very extraordinary and unusual spirit of liberty to carry any election.

"For this reason, Sir, if our septennial Parliaments be any longer continued, I shall not wonder to see the minister's letters of recommendation, with respect to the choice of any candidate as implicitly obeyed in all our counties, cities, boroughs, as the King's *Conge d'Elire* is now in the chapters of our episcopal Cathedrals; and if this should ever come to be our case, I shall look with indignation upon every man who pretends to be a free Briton. The very pretence would be an insult upon the understanding of him it was addressed to. We should be all slaves: God knows to whom; but I hope it will never be to any minister from Hanover. I say, I hope it will never be to any minister from Hanover: though it is hard to tell what a corrupt parliament may not do; what a corrupt nation may not submit to. Happen what will, I am resolved, while I live, to endeavour to prevent such a dismal catastrophe: and therefore I shall conclude with moving, for leave to bring a bill to enforce the calling of a new parliament every year, after the expiration of this present Parliament."

The motion was thus seconded by HUMPHREY SYDENHAM, Esq.

"SIR,

"The danger our constitution is in from corruption has by late experience been made so evident, that if there be a gentleman amongst us, who is void of any apprehensions of that kind, I shall very freely pronounce him void of all concern for the liberties of his country. I must therefore take it for granted that every gentleman in this House is of opinion, that something ought to be done

 for

for preventing, or, at least lessening the effect of ministerial corruption, both at elections and in Parliament: and my honourable friend, who made you this motion, has so clearly shewn, that annual Parliaments will be the most effectual for this purpose, that I think I need not add any thing to what he has said on that head. Indeed the proposition is so self evident, that it stands in no need of any illustration; and therefore I shall confine what I have to say to the character, and morals of the people. Sir, the better sort of People in this country have always, till of late years, been remarkable for their bravery, generosity, and hospitality, and those of inferior rank for their honesty, frugality, and industry.—These are the virtues which raised this nation to that height of glory, riches, and power, it had once arrived at: but these virtues are every one of them in danger of being utterly extinguished by ministerial corruption at elections, and in Parliament. For proving this, I have no occasion to appeal to any thing but experience. Under the late administration the decay of every one of these virtues, and the causes of that decay became so visible to every thinking man in the kingdom, that the whole nation, except the very tools of the minister, joined in putting an end to his power; and thank God! with the help of a very extraordinary conjuncture at Court, we at last, in some degree, succeeded in our endeavours. For this reason I say, I need not appeal to any thing but experience, for shewing what an effect public corruption has upon private as well as public virtue: but as it may be proved by reason, as well as experience, and as I think it necessary to take advantage of every argument that can be thought of for establishing the truth of this proposition, I shall beg leave to consider separately every one of the virtues I have mentioned, in order to shew from the reason of things, how necessarily it

must decay in proportion as public corruption is introduced; and first, with regard to courage, or bravery.

"Though courage, or resolution, Sir, depends in some measure upon the nature, or constitution of the man, yet it may be very much encreased, or diminished by custom, and education; and especially by public rewards bestowed upon, or refused to, those who have shewn any remarkable degree of it in the service of their country. In former times, and when we had an honest and wise Administration, the chief method by which our nobility and gentry could recommend themselves to the esteem of their country, or the favor of their sovereign, was by their courage, and military capacity: and the same consideration, made them take notice of those who were in any station below them, which propagated a brave, and military spirit among all ranks of men in the kingdom. In those days our ministers did not desire any man in Parliament to vote as they directed: they desired no man to vote but according to the dictates of his own conscience; and therefore, they never thought of rewarding those who approved, much less of punishing those who disapproved of their measures in Parliament. At elections again, though a seat in parliament was always reckoned honorable, yet as it was in ancient times reckoned rather burthensome, than profitable, there was never any violent competition at the election, and consequently the person chosen never thought himself much obliged to those who voted for him, nor did they so much as expect any favors from him upon that account alone. But no sooner did ministers begin to solicit the votes, instead of convincing the reason of members of Parliament, than they began to think themselves obliged to reward those who complied with their solicitation; and soon after this practice was introduced, a seat in Parliament became profitable, as

well as honorable, which of course begot violent competitions at elections; and this made voters again claim a merit with those, in favor of whom they gave their vote at any election.

*Hinc prima mali labes*——

"From thenceforth, Sir, the natural channel through which all public honors and preferments flowed, began to be disused; and betraying our country to the will of a Minister in Parliament, or at elections, began to be the only channel through which a man could expect any honor, or preferment. When this began, or whether it has not met with some interruptions since it first began, I shall not determine: but this I will say, that it never became so apparent, as it did under the late Administration: and, I wish we may not fatally feel the consequences of it in the war we are now engaged in. The natural courage of Englishmen is not by any discouragements to be absolutely extinguished; but I wish it may not have taken a wrong turn: I wish we may not find that the courage of our men is become rather an avaricious, than an ambitions courage; and that men now seek to raise by their courage their private fortunes, rather than their own, or their country's glory: for if that be the case, we may make good pirates, or marauders; but we shall never, while this spirit remains, make good soldiers, or seamen; and no man, I believe, can expect, that we should be able to put a glorious end to the war, either by piracy, or marauding. Courage, Sir, like many other good qualities, becomes laudable only according to the use that is made of it; and the motives upon which it is founded; for a man who ventures his life with no other view but that of raising his own private fortune, differs from a common highwayman in nothing but this, that the one plunders according to law, the other against it. When I say this,

this, Sir, I hope it will not be thought that I intend to reflect upon any of those brave men who have ventured their lives in taking prizes from the enemies of their country; for as they thereby weaken the enemy, it is a public service as well as a private advantage; and when the first of these motives is their chief inducement, which I hope it always is, with the officers at least, they deserve the esteem and applause of their country.—From such gentlemen we may expect an equal behaviour, where nothing but blows and triumphs are to be got from the enemy; but this is not to be expected from those who have nothing but the prize in view.

"This sort of courage, which proceeds from sordid avarice, I have mentioned, Sir, only to shew that we are not to suppose, that all the bold actions which we read of in our journals, proceed from that true and generous spirit of courage, by which our ancestors were actuated; nor are we to judge of the spirit of a people from what appears in their regular armies, and navies; because a spirit of courage may for some time be preserved in the armies or navies of a country, after it has been industriously depressed amongst all other ranks of men. The only way to judge in this case is, to consider the conduct and behaviour of the gentlemen of fortune in their country, the methods they take to recommend themselves to the esteem of their country, and the qualifications which recommend those of inferior rank to their favor: and from these considerations we must conclude, that the ancient spirit of this nation is now almost entirely extinct—Do we now see any gentleman of fortune who is not of the army or navy endeavouring to recommend himself by his courage or military knowledge? Do we now hear of the armies of foreign Princes being encouraged by the example of a crowd of English volunteers? Do we now hear of

any gentleman's encouraging his tenants and servants to make themselves masters of military discipline, or conferring distinguished favors upon those who have shewn great courage and resolution upon any occasion? Few such examples are to be met with in our present story: and the reason is plain: all public favors are now bestowed upon voting, not fighting: if a man be qualified to vote, he has no occasion for any other qualification. And of late years, even in our army or navy, it has appeared to be the best qualification for entitling a man to preferment. We must therefore demolish this superstructure, which has been raised by corruption: we must render it impossible for a minister to expect to gain a majority in Parliament, or at elections, either by bribery, or by a proper dispensation of places and preferments: I say we must do this, if we intend to restore that spirit of bravery, by which our ancestors preserved their liberties, and gained so much glory to their country; and for this purpose, nothing can, in my opinion, be so effectual as the restoration of annual Parliaments.

Then, Sir, as to the generosity and hospitality of our nobility, and gentry, every one knows, that by long Parliaments and corrupt elections, they have been banished almost entirely out of the country; for I hope, it will not be called generosity to give a country fellow by express bargain five or ten guineas for his vote at an election; and as little will it, I hope, be called hospitality to make a county or a borough drunk, once in seven years, by way of preparation for an ensuing election. In former times most of our noblemen and gentlemen lived at their country seats, where they often generally relieved such of the poor in their neighbourhood as were in any real distress; and they daily entertained their friends and neighbours at their houses, not with luxuries and extravagant feasts, but with

a plentiful and hospitable table. By these methods they recommended themselves to the favor of their country, or of some neighbouring city, or borough; and in return, if they desired it, they had sometimes the honor conferred upon them of representing it in Parliament, which being but of short duration, it never induced them to think of altering their method of living, or of leaving their seat in the country. But since the introduction of septennial Parliaments, and with them of course, the practice of downright bribery at all elections, this method of living has been entirely altered; and no wonder it should be so; for suppose a gentleman to have lived in the most generous and hospitable manner in his country, or in the neighbourhood of his borough: suppose such a gentleman sets up for their representative: down comes a courtier with his pockets full of public money, and offers the electors, or such as will vote for him, seven guineas a man: by such an offer the country gentleman's friendship, his generosity, his hospitality, are all at once effaced out of the memories of most of them, and he is thereby defeated of his election. Is it not natural for such a gentleman to resolve not to put himself any more to the trouble and expence of being generous and hospitable? The favor of his countrymen he sees must be purchased, not won: therefore he resolves to contract his expence, in order to prepare his proper ammunition for the next election; and if he succeeds, being then assured of his seat in Parliament for seven years, and sensible that living in the country can be of no service to him in any future election, he retires with his family to London, and resolves to depend upon bribery alone for his success in every future election.

"Thus, Sir, an end is put to the generosity and hospitality of that gentleman; and thus an end has already been

put

put to the generosity, and hospitality of most of the noblemen and gentlemen of the kingdom: but this is not the only evil; for this change of a country life into a town life has introduced a new sort of expence, which is of the most pernicious consequence to the kingdom in general, and to the landed interest in particular. By the ancient country hospitality a great deal was, it is true, consumed, but the consumption was all our own: almost the whole, excepting a few spiceries, was the produce of our own farmers: whereas the expence attending a town life is mostly laid out on things of foreign importation; and most of them of such a nature as to deprive us of every good quality we have left among us. One modern polite supper in town, with a set of Italian musicians to entertain the company, will now cost as much as would formerly have hospitably entertained a whole county for a week; with this difference, that the expence of the latter centered chiefly in the pockets of the neighbouring farmers, whereas the expence of the former centers chiefly in the pockets of foreigners, and those foreigners, perhaps, who are our most dangerous enemies.

" When I consider this, Sir, I do not wonder at the heavy complaints we hear amongst the farmers in all parts of the kingdom, for want of a market for their goods, nor do I wonder at so many of them becoming bankrupts. A man of fortune who lives in London, may in plays, operas, routs, assemblies, French cookery, French sauces, and French wines, spend as much yearly, as he could do, were he to live in the most hospitable manner at his seat in the country: but will any one suppose, there is as much malt, meat, bread, or poultry consumed in his family? Will any one suppose that the poor, or even the farmers or tradesmen in the neighbourhood of his country seat, consume as much when they have nothing but what they take

take from their own table, as when they had his hall to feast in? What a diminution then in the country consumption must the retiring of one great family make! What a distress must be brought upon the county, especially if remote from London, when all its rich families repair to live constantly in this city! Sir, the fatal consequences brought upon our land estates, by thus tempting our rich families to live constantly in London, are so glaring, that I shall wonder to see any landed gentleman in this House oppose the motion; and if any of them do, I shall be apt to suppose, they have some other income less honorable, though perhaps more punctual; for that annual Parliaments would send most of our rich families to the country, and restore our ancient generosity and hospitality, is a question can admit of no dispute; because no gentleman could then preserve his interest in his county, city, or borough, but by going to live amongst them; and if by neglecting to live there, he should be turned out of Parliament, I believe the most courtly dame could hardly prevail upon the most uxorious husband to live in London, having nothing to do there but to see her play at quadrille.

"I now come, Sir, to those good qualities or virtues, for which the inferior rank of our people were formerly very remarkable: these I have said to be honesty, frugality, and industry; and as to every one of these, the manners of our people have been very much altered by the introduction of septennial Parliaments, and the corruption and violent contestation at elections, which have thereby of course been propagated through the whole kingdom. With regard to the honesty of the people, perhaps an instance may be here and there found of a man who acts honestly and fairly in private life; and yet has made it his practice to sell his vote at all elections to the best bidder: but I will

will say, that such a man's honesty proceeds more from his fear of the gallows, than from any natural disposition; and it is well known that few men jump at once into the height of wickedness. They generally begin with little venial sins, and move by degrees to the most aggravating crimes. Do not most of the wretches that suffer at Tyburn tell us, that they began their wicked course with a breach of the Sabbath? This is none of the most heinous sort of crimes; but the danger consists in the first incroachment upon conscience; for being once got into a wicked course, they seldom stop at the threshold. In the same manner, a man who sells his vote at an election to a candidate, who thinks he will sell his country in Parliament, must be sensible he has committed a crime: in so doing he certainly acts against his conscience, and by this means, his acting against his conscience becomes familiar to him, which prepares him for committing any crime he thinks he may be safe in; and then if he commits no crime in private life, it is not for want of will, but for want of opportunity: he is honest just as some women are chaste, only because they never had an opportunity to be otherwise. The only difference is, that he becomes wicked by custom, whereas they are so by nature. We should therefore, in order to preserve the honesty of our people, prevent, as much as possible, a man's being tempted to sell his vote at an election; and the best method for doing this will be to restore annual Parliaments, because no candidate will then be at the expence of corrupting, especially as he cannot expect to be corrupted by a minister after he is chosen. Now, Sir, with regard to the frugality of the people, we know by experience, that what people get by selling their votes at an election, is generally spent in extravagance; and being once led into an extravagant manner of living, few of them ever leave it, as

as long as they have a penny to support it. By this means they are led into necessities, and having once broken in upon their conscience, by selling their vote at an election, they are the less proof against those temptations they are exposed to by their necessities; so that I am persuaded, many a poor man in this kingdom has been brought to the gallows by the bribe he received for his vote at an election. Besides, as all the little places under the government have of late been bestowed upon pliable voters at elections, without requiring any other qualification to recommend them, such voters generally dissipate their own substance in hopes of being afterwards provided for by some little place in the government; and by the example of such orders many of their neighbours are led into the same extravagant course of living, which I believe is one great cause of that luxury which now so generally prevails among the lower sort of people.

"The same causes, Sir, that promote the people's extravagance, prevent their being industrious.—Whilst a little freeholder or tradesman is spending in extravagance his infamous earnings at an election, he disdains to think of honest industry, or labor; and being once got out of the road of industry, many of them can never find their way into it again. If such fellows are not provided by the Court candidate, who was chosen by their venality, with some little post in the government, which all expect, but few are so lucky as to meet with, they soon become bankrupt, are thrown into prison, and their families become a burden upon the country which they have sold and betrayed. This is the fate of most of them; and as to those who happen to be provided for, their good luck is of the most pernicious consequence in the neighbourhood, because it encourages others to become venal, in hopes of meeting with the same good fortune; for in this case

case, it is the same as in a lottery; people overlook the thousands that are unfortunate, and take notice only of the happy few that get the great prizes: if it were not for this unaccountable humor in mankind, no man would be an adventurer in a lottery: no man, even in this corrupt age, would sell his vote at an election. But whilst this humor remains, which it will do as long as the race of man subsists, there will be adventurers, there will be sellers, there is no preventing it, but by demolishing the market; and this I think will be the effect of the Bill, now proposed to you, if it be passed into a law: it will demolish the market for corruption, both in this House, and every election in the kingdom; for ministers will not then be corrupt, because they can expect no success by their corruption; and though little contests may now and then happen among country gentlemen, yet they will never be so violent as to occasion violent corruption on either side of the question.

"On the contrary, Sir, I believe very few contests will ever happen among the country gentlemen; for in every county, city, and borough in the kingdom, the chief families will come to a compromise among themselves, and agree to take the honor in turns of representing it in parliament. No man will grudge his neighbour the honor for one year, when he knows he is to have the same honor the next year, or in a year or two after, especially when that honor is to be attended with no expectation of any post, place, or pension from the Crown, unless he can recommend himself to it by some other qualification. Whereas, when a gentleman is to be chosen into Parliament for seven years, and when his being a member, without so much as the appearance of any other qualification, is known to be sufficient for recommending rather than entitling him to some place of great profit under the

Crown, I do not wonder at his often meeting with a violent opposition. The length of the term makes any such compromise as I have mentioned impossible; which of course creates him antagonists amongst those who are only ambitious of the honor; and the expectation of advantage creates him antagonists among those who are resolved to make their market. This generally begets a violent opposition, and if the antagonist be one of the latter sort, he generally has recourse to bribery; for as he is resolved to sell, he makes no scruple to purchase, if he thinks he can purchase for less than he may sell.

"These, Sir, are the causes why we find such violent contests about elections to septennial Parliaments; and as all these causes would cease the moment we made our Parliaments annual, I think it is next to a demonstration, that in elections for annual Parliaments, there could be no violent opposition, and much less any bribery or corruption. Therefore if we have a mind to restore the practice of those virtues, for which our ancestors were so conspicuous, and by which they handed down to us riches, glory, renown, and liberty, we must restore the custom of having Parliaments not only annually held, but annually chosen. It was a regulation restored and established by one of the greatest and wisest Princes that ever swayed the sceptre of this kingdom; and no one can say that this regulation is inconsistent with the state of war we are now in, or may be in at the end of the present Parliament; for I am far from pretending to determine that the war will be sooner at an end. On the contrary, I am afraid it will last much longer, unless we be obliged to put an end to it by an inglorious peace; but this can make no difference, for when the first law for annual Parliaments was passed by EDWARD III., the kingdom was in a most violent ferment, on account of seizing the Queen Mother

ther and her favorite MORTIMER; and when the second law for the same purpose was passed by that Prince, he could not be said to be in a state of perfect tranquillity; for though the war in France had some time before been brought to a happy period by the treaty of Bretigny, yet the war in Bretagne continued, and even that treaty remained, as to many parts of it, unfulfilled.

"Having mentioned two laws passed in the reign of EDWARD III. for establishing annual Parliaments, perhaps some gentlemen may imagine, that the first law which was passed in the 4th year of that King's reign, had run into desuetude, and that therefore it became necessary to revive and enforce it by the new law for the same purpose, which was passed in the 36th year of his reign; but this, Sir, was not the reason that made it necessary to pass a new law for that purpose. Our lawyers have always been ingenious in contriving how to evade the most express laws, especially when by such an evasion they could favor the power of the Crown. The words of the first law were that 'A Parliament shall be holden once a year, and oftener if need be.' A man of common understanding would conclude from these words that, by this law, the King must hold a Parliament once a year at least, and that he might hold it oftener, if he found it necessary; but the lawyers found out that the words if need be related to the first part of the law, as well as the second, and that therefore the sense of the law was, that a Parliament shall be holden once a year, if need be, or oftener, if need be; by which they left it in the power of the Crown to hold a Parliament as often or as seldom as they pleased, and thereby rendered the law of no manner of effect. Therefore to prevent the Crown's taking advantage of this evasion, a new law was made in the 36th year of that King, who never refused to grant his subjects what

laws

laws they thought necessary for securing their liberties, by which it was enacted, 'That a Parliament shall be holden every year.' This set the invention of our lawyers again to work, and they were not long in finding a new evasion; for in the very next reign, the method of prorogation was introduced, and by that means our liberties were even then brought into the utmost danger; for a Parliament chosen by illegal methods, and continued by a prorogation, surrendered our liberties into the hands of the Crown; and if the Bill now proposed be not agreed to, some such Parliament may again do the same, or something that is tantamount, with this difference, that the Crown has now a regular well-disciplined army to support its incroachments, and the people have neither arms nor discipline for enabling them to rescue their liberties out of the hands of such a King, and such a Parliament.

"When we consider this, Sir, we ought to be the more jealous of the independency of our Parliaments; because if our liberties should be given up by a dependent Parliament, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for the people to rescue them by arms, as they did in the reign of RICHARD II. This makes me the more sanguine for the Bill now proposed, and for this reason, among many others, I conclude with seconding the motion."

Sir WM. YONGE, the secretary at war, was the only member of administration who attempted to reply; and the question was negatived by a majority of 145 to 113.

In thirteen years after, another motion was made for shortening the duration of parliaments, but so feebly urged as to be negatived almost without the formality of a debate.

 Alderman

Alderman SAWBRIDGE's frequently renewed efforts on the like tendency deserve to be remembered as proofs of his zeal, if not of his energy or genius.

The Duke of RICHMOND also prepared, and offered to the Upper House, in the session of 1780, a bill for the reform of Parliament, founded on the bases of annual election and universal suffrage; but which was afterwards dropped, probably as a measure little calculated for the discussion of the House of Peers.

But in May 1782 Mr. PITT brought forward with equal policy, and address a motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of the representation of the people in parliament. He began with an apology for undertaking a task so extensive, and which required abilities and experience so much greater than his; but having said this, he would trust to the indulgence of the House, and believe, that the importance of the subject, to which he meant to call their attention, would induce them to treat it with the utmost seriousness and respect. The representation of the Commons in Parliament was a matter so truly interesting, that it had at all times excited the regard of the most enlightened; and the defects which they had found in that representation had given them reason to apprehend the most alarming consequences to the constitution. It would be needless for him in the present moment to recal to the memory of the House the many occasions, upon which he and others in an anxious struggle with a minister, who laboured to exert the corrupt influence of the Crown in support of an inadequate representation of the people, maintained the necessity that there was for a calm revision of the principles of the constitution, and a moderate reform of such defects as had imperceptibly and gradually stole in to deface, and which threatened at

last

last totally to destroy the most beautiful fabric of government in the world. Upon these occasions, they were unsuccessful in their efforts, on account of that corrupt influence of which he had spoken; but at last he thanked God, the voice of the people had happily prevailed, and we were now blessed with a ministry, whose wishes went along with those of the people for a moderate reform of the errors which had intruded themselves into the constitution; and he was happy to see there was a spirit of unanimity prevalent in every part of the kingdom, and also in every part of that House, which made the present day the fittest for undertaking this great task. The ministers had declared their virtuous resolution of supporting the King's government by means more honorable, as well as more permanent than corruption; and the nation had confidence in the declarations of men, who had so invariably proved themselves the friends of freedom, and the animated supporters of an equal and fair system of representation. That the frame of our constitution had undergone material alterations, by which the commons house of Parliament had received an improper and dangerous bias, and by which indeed it had fallen so greatly from that direction and effect, which it was intended, and ought, to have in the constitution, he believed it would be idle for him to attempt to prove. It was a fact so plain and palpable, that every man's reason, if not his experience, must point it out to him. He had only to examine the quality and nature of that branch of the constitution as originally established, and compare it with its present state and condition. That beautiful frame of government which has made us the envy and admiration of mankind, in which the people were entitled to hold so distinguished a share, was so far dwindled and departed from its original purity, as that the representatives ceased in a great

degree to be connected with the people. It was the essence of the constitution that the people had a share in the government by the means of representation; and its excellence and permanency was calculated to consist in this representation having been designed to be equal, easy, practicable, and complete. When it ceased to be so, when the representative ceased to have connection with the constituent, and was either dependent on the Crown, or the Aristocracy, there was a defect in the frame of representation, and it was not innovation, but recovery of constitution, to repair it.

He would not in the present instance call to their view, or endeavour to discuss the question, whether this species of reform, or that, whether this suggestion, or that, was the best; and which would most completely tally and square with the original frame of the constitution: it was simply his purpose to move for the institution of an inquiry, composed of such men as the House should in their wisdom select, as the most proper, and the best qualified for investigating this subject, and making a report to the House of the best means of carrying into execution a moderate and substantial reform of the representation of the people. Though he would not press upon their consideration any proposition whatever, he should still think it his duty to state some facts and circumstances, which, in his idea, made this object of reform essentially requisite. He believed, however, that even this was unnecessary; for there was not a gentleman in the house, who would not acknowledge with him, that the representation, as it now stood, was incomplete. It was perfectly understood, that there were some boroughs absolutely governed by the treasury; and others totally possessed by them. It required no experience to say, that such boroughs had no one quality of representation

in them: they had no share nor substance in the general interests of the country; and they had in fact no stake for which to appoint their guardians in the popular assembly. The influence of the treasury in some boroughs was contested, not by the electors of these boroughs, but by some one or other powerful man who assumed, or pretended to, an hereditary property of what ought only to be the rights and privileges of the electors. The interests of the treasury were considered as well as the interests of the great man, the lord, or the commoner, who had connection with the borough; but the interests of the people, the rights of the electors were the only things that never were attended to, nor taken into the account. Would any man say, that in this case, there was the most distant idea or principle of representation? There were other boroughs which had now in fact no actual existence, but in the return of members of the House. They had no existence in property, in population, in trade, in weight. There were hardly any men in the borough who had a right to vote; and they were the slaves and subjects of a person who claimed the property of the borough, and who in fact made the return. This also was no representation, nor any thing like it. Another set of boroughs and towns in the lofty possession of English freedom claimed to themselves the right of bringing their votes to market. They had no other market, no other property, and no other stake in the country than the property and price which they procured for their votes. Such boroughs were the most dangerous of all others. So far from consulting the interests of the country in the choice they made, they held out their borough to the best purchaser, and in fact they belonged more to the Nabob of Arcot, than they did to the people of Great Britain. They were cities and boroughs most within the jurisdiction of the

of the Carnatic than the limits of the empire of Great Britain; and it was a fact pretty well known and generally understood, that the Nabob of Arcot had no less than seven or eight members in that house. Such boroughs, then, were the sources of corruption: they gave rise to an inundation of corrupt wealth and corrupt members, who had no regard nor connection either for or with the the people of this kingdom. It had always been considered, in all nations, as the greatest source of danger to a kingdom, when a foreign influence was suffered to creep into the national councils. The fact was clear, that the influence of the nabobs of India was great: why then might not their imaginations point out to them another most probable circumstance that might occur, the danger of which would be evident, as soon as mentioned. Might not a foreign state in enmity with this country, by means of these boroughs, procure a party of men to act for them under the mask and character of members of that House? Such a cabal was more to be dreaded than any other; and this, among other domestic evils, was to be apprehended from the present incomplete and improper form of representation. How many other circumstances were there, under which the various descriptions of boroughs in this kingdom were influenced and seduced from their real and direct duty?

Having mentioned these facts, by which experience came in aid of reason, to convince him of the inadequacy of representation, he conceived it would be perfectly needless for him to enter into any argument to prove the necessity that there was for a reform in this particular. He was convinced that every gentleman would acknowledge the truth of the fact, however they might differ about the means of accomplishing it; or about the delicacy with which they ought to meddle in any shape with the

the constitution. He begged leave to say, that there was not a man in that House, who had more reverence for the constitution, and more respect, even for its vestiges than himself.—But he was afraid that the reverence and enthusiasm, which Englishmen entertained for the constitution, would, if not suddenly prevented, be the means of destroying it; for such was their enthusiasm, that they would not even remove its defects, for fear of touching its beauty. He admired the one so much, so great was his reverence for the beauties of that constitution, that he wished to remove those defects, as he clearly perceived that they were defects which altered the radical principles of the constitution, and it would not be innovation, as he had said, but recovery of the constitution, to remove them: gentlemen were ready to acknowledge the truth of this; but they stopped from the difficulty of accomplishing the necessary reform. Many propositions had been made from different quarters towards this great national object. In particular it had been said, that the purity and independence of Parliament would be the most easily accomplished, and the most effectually, by anihilating the corrupt influence of the crown. This he was ready to acknowledge as a great, and powerful means of restoring independency and respect to parliament; and he was happy to see, that under the present ministry the corrupt influence of the crown would not be exerted. It might therefore be said with truth, that now the injurious, corrupt, and baneful influence of the crown was no more. Its effect would not be felt during the ministry of a set of men who were the friends of constitutional freedom. But it was the duty of parliament to provide for the future, and to take care that in no time this secret and dark system should be revived, to contaminate the fair, and honorable fabric of our government. This influence was of

the most pernicious kind; and at all times had been pointed to as the fertile source of all our miseries. It had been substituted in the room of wisdom, of activity, of exertion, and of success. It was but too naturally connected with the extensive limits of our empire, and with the broad and great scale upon which its operations were conducted. It had been truly said of this corrupt influence, 'That it had grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength.' Unhappily, however, for this country, it had not decayed with our decay, nor diminished with our decrease. It bore no sympathy, nor connection with our falling state; but notwithstanding the mad impolicy of a ministry who had contracted the limits of the empire, this corrupt influence was still found to exist in all its strength, and had supported that ministry for a length of years, against all the consequences of a mischievous system and a desolated empire. He thanked Heaven, that we had now an administration who placed their dependence on a more honorable basis, and who conceived nothing to be more necessary or essential to the permanent interests of their country, than the total overthrow and extinction of this influence.

It had been thought by some, that the best means of effecting a more near relation between the representatives and the people was to take from the decayed and corrupt boroughs a part of their members, and add them to those places which had most interest and stake in the country. Another mode of making the connection between the representative and constitution more lively and intimate, was to bring the former more frequently before the electors by shortening the duration of Parliament. But all these propositions he would beg leave, for the present, to omit entirely; and to deliver the matter to the committee to be chosen, free from all suggestions whatever, that they

they might exercise their own judgment, and collect from the lights, which they would receive, full and complete information on the subject. He would therefore content himself with saying, that having mentioned the manner in which he would take the liberty of proposing to institute this inquiry, he hoped that he should be forgiven for undertaking this important business. The matter of complaint was clear to him; and he was strengthened in his opinion from the advice of some of the first and greatest characters in the kingdom. The assistance which he had received, he acknowledged with gratitude, as it fortified his mind in regard to the opinions which he had formed on the subject. It was also the opinion of many respectable characters, now no more, and particularly of one [Lord CHATHAM], of whom every member in the House could speak with more freedom than himself. That person was not apt to indulge vague and chimerical speculations, inconsistent with practice and expediency. He personally knew, that it was the opinion of this person, that, without recurring to first principles in this respect, and establishing a more solid and equal representation of the people by which the proper constitutional connection should be revived, this nation, with the best capacities for grandeur and happiness of any on the face of the earth, must be confounded with the mass of those whose liberties were lost in the corruption of the people. With regard to the time, at which he had brought it on, he was convinced that it was the most proper and seasonable moment that could be imagined. If it had been brought forward during an eager opposition to the measures of government it might have been considered as the object of spight or peevishness; and if under such circumstances they had prevailed, it would have been said to be carried by assault. But now there was no division of sentiment. His Ma-

jesty's ministers expected the voice of the people, and were anxiously bent on the reformation of Parliament. If there was any division of opinion at all it was about the means of accomplishing the object.

He concluded with moving, "that a committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the representation in parliament, and to report to the house their observations thereon."

The proposed inquiry having been negatived, Mr. PITT, on the 7th of May following, submitted to the House a specific plan of reform for adding one hundred members to the counties, and abolishing a proportionable number of the burgage-tenure, and other small and obnoxious boroughs. Upon rising to open the business, he declared, that in his life he had never felt more embarassment, or more anxiety, than he felt at that moment, when for his country's good, he found himself obliged to discover, and lay before the House, the imperfections of that constitution to which every Englishman ought to look up with reverential awe; a constitution which, while it continued such as framed by our ancestors, was truly called the production of the most consummate wisdom: raised by that constitution to greatness and to glory, England had been at once the envy and the pride of the world. Europe was taught by experience that liberty was the foundation of true greatness; and that while England remained under a government perfectly free, ſhe never failed to perform exploits that dazzled the neighbouring nations. To him, he did assure the House, it was interesting, indeed interesting and useful beyond the power of description. He wished, however, the House to view the arduous and very difficult task he had ventured to undertake, in its true light. No man saw that glorious fabric, the constitution of this country, with more admiration,

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nor with more reverence than himself: he beheld it with wonder, with veneration, and with gratitude: it gave an Englishman such dear and valuable privileges, or, he might say, such advantageous and dignified prerogatives, as were not only beyond the reach of the subjects of every other nation, but it afforded us a degree of happiness unknown to those who lived under governments of a nature less pregnant with principles of liberty: indeed there was no form of government on the known surface of the globe, that was so nearly allied to perfect freedom. But a melancholy series of events, which could be accounted for only upon this principle, that, during the last fifteen years, there had been a deviation from the principles of that happy constitution, under which the people of England had so long flourished.

Mr. Pitt reminded the House how and upon what reasons the public had begun to look at the state of parliamentary representation; of the steps they had taken to procure some remedy for the inadequacy which they discovered; the degree of success that their endeavours had not met with; and what it was that particularly occasioned him to rise at that moment in support of their petitions. He said to put the House in possesion of all these circumstances, he need only advert to the history of a few years recently past; a history which he would touch upon as shortly as possible, because it was not only a most melancholy picture of calamitous and disgraceful events, but because it was so extremely difficult to mention it in any shape, that would not appear invidious, and personal. He then stated, that the disastrous consequences of the American war, the immense expenditure of the public money; the consequent heavy burthen of taxes, and the pressure of all the collateral difficulties produced by the foregoing circumstances, gradually disgusted the people; and at last provoked

provoked them to turn their eyes inward on themselves, in order to see if there was not something radically wrong at home, that was the chief cause of all the evils they felt from their misfortunes abroad. Searching for the internal sources of their foreign fatalities, they naturally turned their attention to the constitution under which they lived, and to the practice of it. Upon looking to that House, they found that by length of time, by the origin and progress of undue influence, and from other causes, the spirit of liberty, and the powers of check and control upon the crown and executive government, were greatly lessened, and debilitated. Hence clamors sprung up without doors, and hence, as was perfectly natural in the moment of anxiety, to procure an adequate and a fit remedy to a practical grievance, a spirit of speculation went forth, and a variety of schemes founded in visionary and impracticable ideas of reform, were suddenly produced. It was not for him, he said, with unhallowed hands to touch the venerable pile of the constitution, and to deface the fabric; to see it stand in need of repair was sufficiently melancholy; but the more he revered it, the more he wished to secure its duration to the latest posterity; the greater he felt the necessity of guarding against its decay. Innovations were at all times dangerous, and should never be attempted but when necessity called for them. Upon this principle he had given up the idea which he suggested to the house last year; and therefore his object at present was not to innovate, but rather to renew and invigorate the spirit of the constitution, without deviating materially from its present form. When he submitted this subject to the consideration of the House last year, he was told, that the subject ought not to be discussed amidst the din of arms: the objection was not then without its force: but at present it could not be renewed, as

as we were happily once more in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace. This therefore was a proper time to enter upon the business of a reformation, which every man who gave himself a moment's time to think, must be satisfied was absolutely necessary.

An Englishman, who should compare the flourishing state of his country some twenty years ago with the state of humiliation in which he now beholds her, must be convinced that the ruin which he now deplores, having been brought on by slow degrees, and almost imperceptibly, proceeded from something radically wrong in the constitution. Of the existence of a radical error no one seemed to doubt; nay almost all were so clearly satisfied of it, that various remedies had been devised by those who wished most heartily to remove it. The House itself had discovered, that a secret influence of the crown had been felt within those walls, and had often been found strong enough to stifle the sense of duty, and to over-rule the propositions made to satisfy the wishes and desires of the people: the House of Commons in former Parliaments had been base enough to feed the influence that enslaved its members; and thus was at one time the parent and offspring of corruption. This influence however had risen to such a height, that men were ashamed any longer to deny its existence; and the House had at length been driven to the necessity of voting, that it ought to be diminished. Various were the expedients that had been thought of, in order to effect so salutary a purpose, as was that of guarding against this influence; of shutting against it the doors of that House, where if it once got footing after the resolution alluded to, liberty could no longer find an asylum. The House of Commons, which, according to the true spirit of the constitution, should be the guardian of the people's freedom, the constitutional check and

control

control over the executive power, would, through this influence, degenerate into a mere engine of tyranny and oppression, to destroy the constitution in effect, though it should in its outward form still remain.

Among the various expedients that had been devised to bar the entrance of such influence into that House, he had heard principally of three. *One* was to extend the right of voting for members to serve in Parliament, which was now so confined, to all the inhabitants of the kingdom indiscriminately; so that every man without the distinction of freeholder, of freeman of a corporation, should have the franchise of a vote for a person to represent him in Parliament; and this mode, he understood, was thought by those who patronized it to be the only one consistent with true liberty in a free constitution, where every one ought to be governed by those laws only to which all have actually given their consent, either in person, or by their representative. For himself, he utterly rejected and condemned this mode, which it was impossible for him to adopt without libelling those renowned forefathers, who had framed the constitution in the fulness of their wisdom, and had fashioned it for the government of freemen, not of slaves. If this doctrine should obtain, nearly one half of the people must in fact be slaves; for it was a right of voting, howsoever finely it might appear in theory, could never be reduced to practice. But, though it were even practicable, still one half of the nation would be slaves; for all those who vote for the unsuccessful candidates, cannot, in the strictness of this doctrine, be said to be represented in parliament; and therefore they are governed by laws, to which they give not their assent in person or by representatives: consequently according to the ideas of friends to this expedient, all those who vote for unsuccessful candidates, must be slaves; nay it

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was oftentimes still harder with those who are members of Parliament, who are made slaves also, and are governed by laws, to which they not only have not given their consent, but against which they have actually voted.

For his part, his idea of representation was this, that the members once chosen and returned to Parliament, were in effect the representatives of the people at large, as well of those who did not vote at all, or who having voted gave their votes against them, as of those by whose suffrage they were actually seated in the house. This being therefore his principle, he could not consent to an innovation founded on doctrines subversive of liberty, which in reality went so far as to say, that this house of commons was not, and that no house of commons ever had been a true, and constitutional representation of the people; for no house of commons had yet been elected by *all* the men in the kingdom. The country had long prospered, and had even attained the summit of glory, though this doctrine had never been embraced; and he hoped that no one would ever attempt to introduce it into the laws of England, or treat it in any other light than as a mere speculative proposition, that may be good in theory, but which it would be absurd and chimerical to endeavour to reduce to practice.

The *second* expedient he had heard of, was to abolish the franchise which several boroughs now enjoy, of returning members to serve in Parliament. These places were known by the favourite popular appellation of "*rotten boroughs*." He confessed there was something very plausible in this idea; but still he was not ready to adopt it: he held those boroughs in the light of deformities, which in some degree disfigured the fabric of the constitution, but which he feared could not be removed with-

out endangering the whole pile. It was true that the representation of the people could not be good, unless the interests of the representatives and the represented were the same: the moment they became different, from that moment the liberty of the people was in danger; because those who ought to be the guardians of it might find their account in circumscribing it within narrower limits than the constitution marked out, or in carrying through measures which might in the end effectually destroy it. It must be admitted from a variety of circumstances, which it was unnecessary for him at present to explain, that though the members returned by boroughs might be for the present the brightest patterns of patriotism and liberty, still there was no doubt but that borough members, considered in the abstract, were more liable to the operation of that influence, which every good man wished to see destroyed in that house, than those members who were returned by the counties; and therefore though he was afraid to cut up the roots of this influence by disfranchising the boroughs, because he was afraid of doing more harm than good, by using a remedy that might be thought worse than the disease, still he thought it his duty to counteract if possible, that influence, the instruments of which he was afraid to remove. The boroughs ought to be considered not only as places of franchise, but also as places where the franchise was in some measure connected with property by burgage tenure; and therefore, as he was unwilling to dissolve the boroughs, he would endeavour to defeat the effect of undue influence in them, by introducing and establishing a counter balance that should keep it down, and prevent it from ruining the country.

This brought him naturally to the *third* expedient, that he had often heard mentioned, which was to add a certain number of members to the house, who should be returned

returned by the counties and the metropolis. It was unnecessary for him to say, that the county members in general were almost necessarily taken from that class and description of gentlemen the least liable to the seduction of corrupt influence, the most deeply interested in the liberty and prosperity of the country, and consequently the most likely to pursue such measures as appeared to them the most salutary to their country: in the hands of such men, the liberties of their constituents would be safe, because the interests of such representatives and the represented must necessarily be the same. This expedient appeared to him the most fit to be adopted, because it was the least objectionable: it had the merit of promising an effectua counterbalance to the weight of the boroughs, without being an innovation in the form of the constitution. He would not then say what number of members ought to be added to the counties; he would leave that to be inserted in a bill, which, if the resolutions he meant to propose should pass, he intended to move for leave to bring in: he however would say, that, in his opinion, the number ought not to be under one hundred. It was true he thought the house would then be more numerous than he could wish; but still it were better it should be so, than that the liberties of the country should be exposed to destruction from the baneful influence of the crown in the boroughs. He was not however without an expedient, by degrees to reduce the number of members, even after the addition, down to nearly the present number: his expedient was this; that whenever it should be proved before the tribunal, which happily was now established by law to try the merits of contested elections, that the majority of any borough had been bribed and corrupted, the borough should then lose the privilege of sending members to

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parliament; the corrupt majority should be disfranchised; and the honest minority be permitted to vote at elections for Knights of the shire. By this expedient he was sure the boroughs would be preserved free from corruption; or else they must be abolished gradually, and the number of members of that house be reduced to its present standard. This disfranchising of boroughs would be the work of time: the necessity of disfranchising any one, whenever that necessity should appear, would sanctify the measure: it would appear to be what in fact it would then be, an act of justice, not of whim, party, or caprice, as it would be founded not on a surmise, but on the actual proof of guilt.

After amplifying upon this for some time, and shewing that it was equally founded on policy and justice, he urgently pressed the necessity of something being done in compliance with the petitions that had been presented; complaining of the present state of the representation; and took abundant pains to caution the house against adopting any extravagant plans of reform, that might be suggested by enthusiastic speculatists on the one hand, or obstinately refusing to take any step whatever in compliance with the petitions, under a childish dislike and dread of innovation on the other. After urging very elaborately an infinite variety of arguments Mr. PITT said his first resolution was, what he conceived every individual member would feel the force of, and be ready to come into without a moment's hesitation: of the second, he entertained hopes pretty nearly as sanguine, convinced as he was of its propriety and justice; and with regard to his third, though it might possibly meet with considerable opposition, he was extremely anxious to obtain it the sanction of the house. He then read his three resolutions, which in substance were as follow.

1st. That

1st. That it was the opinion of the house, that measures were highly necessary to be taken for the future prevention of bribery, and expence at elections.

2dly. That for the future, when the majority of voters for any borough should be convicted of gross and notorious corruption before a select committee of that house, appointed to try the merits of that election, such borough should be disfranchised, and the minority of voters, not so convicted, should be entitled to vote for the county in which such borough should be situated.

3dly. That an addition of the Knights of the shire, and of representatives of the metropolis, should be added to the state of the representation.

Mr. PITT said if he should be so happy as to succeed in carrying these resolutions, his intention was to bring in a bill upon their respective principles. When that bill was under consideration, it would then be the proper time for discussing and deciding on the number of Knights of the shire to be added, and for making all such other regulations, and restrictions, as to the wisdom of the house might appear necessary. He therefore should not hold any gentleman, who chose to vote for his resolutions as containing general propositions, to be bound and pledged either to support the bill he intended to bring in, provided the house agreed to his present motion, or to any clauses it might be fraught with; but to be wholly at liberty, and as much unrestrained in that respect, as if he had not voted in support of the resolutions. Before he sat down, he again earnestly pressed the house either to adopt his propositions, or to suggest some other plan equally calculated to remedy the grievance.

The motion was seconded by Mr. DUNCOMBE; but met with a very strenuous opposition from Mr. POWIS, who paid however a very high complement to the beautiful

theory, the elegant speculation, and the bright oratory of the right honorable mover. Lord NORTH also spoke against the measure, declaring, with an happy allusive pleasantry "that, whilst some with LEAR demanded an hundred knights, and others with GONERIL were satisfied with fifty, he with REGAN exclaimed "No—not one." As Mr. FOX, Mr. SHERIDAN, Mr. BEAUFOY, and several other very able speakers took a share in the debate, it was continued till past two o'clock in the morning, when the house divided on the order of the day, the ayes 293—noes 149—majority against Mr. PITT's propositions 144.

Mr. PITT's last attempt of this kind was made in April 1785, when, in conformity to the notice he had previously given, he again called the attention of the house, to the subject of a reform in the representation of the people. In entering upon this subject, he said he was aware of the division of sentiment, and of the pertinacity with which some men adhered to opinions inimical to every species of reform. But he rose with hopes infinitely more sanguine than he ever felt before, and with hopes which he conceived to be rationally and solidly founded. There never was a moment when the minds of men were more enlightened on this interesting topic than now: there never was a moment when they were more prepared for its discussion. A great many objections, which from time to time had been adduced against reform, would not lie against the propositions which he intended to submit to the house; and the question was in truth new in all its shape to the present Parliament.

He was sensible of the difficulty there was now, and ever must be, in proposing a plan of reform. The number of gentlemen who were hostile to reform, were a phalanx, which ought to give alarm to any individual

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upon rising to suggest such a measure. Those, who with a sort of superstitious awe reverence the constitution, so much, as to be fearful of touching even its defects, had always reprobated every attempt to purify the representation. They acknowledged its inequality and corruption; but in their enthusiasm for the grand fabric, they would not suffer a reformer with unhallowed hands to repair the injuries which it suffered from time. Others, who, perceiving the deficiencies that had arisen from circumstances, were solicitous of their amendment, yet resisted the attempt, under the argument, that when once we had presumed to touch the constitution in one point, the awe which had heretofore kept us back from the daring enterprize of innovation might abate, and there was no foreseeing to what alarming lengths we might progressively go, under the mask of reformation. Others there were, but for these he confessed he had not the same respect, who considered the present state of representation as pure and adequate to all its purposes, and perfectly consistent with the first principles of representation. The fabric of the house of commons was an ancient pile, on which they had been all taught to look with reverence and awe; from their cradles they had been accustomed to view it as a pattern of perfection: their ancestors had enjoyed freedom and prosperity under it; and therefore an attempt to make any alterations in it would be deemed by some enthusiastic admirers of antiquity as impious and sacrilegious. No one reverenced the venerable fabric more than he did; but all mankind knew that the best institutions, like human bodies, carried in themselves the seeds of decay and corruption; and therefore he thought himself justifiable in proposing remedies against this corruption, which the frame of the constitution must necessarily experience in the lapse

of years, if not prevented by wise and judicious regulations.

To men who argued in this manner, he did not presume to address his propositions, for such men he despaired of convincing; but he had well grounded hopes, that, in what he should offer to the house, he should be able to convince gentlemen of the former descriptions, that though they had argued so strongly against general and unexplained notions of reform, their arguments would not weigh against the precise and explicit proposition, which it was his purpose to submit to them. The objection to reform, under the idea of innovation, would not hold good against his suggestion; for it was not an innovation on any known and clear principle of the constitution. Their objection to reform, because it might introduce habits of change and alteration, of which no man could foresee the extent or termination, would be equally inapplicable to his plan; for, in his mind, it would be complete and final. In his mind it would comprehend all that a rational reformer would think it necessary now, or at any time, to do, and would therefore give no licence to future or more extensive schemes. The argument that no alteration of the number of members composing the house ought to be at any time suffered, and that no reform of the representation in what was emphatically called the corrupt parts ought to be accomplished by an act of power, would be equally inapplicable; for, by his proposition, he meant to lay it down as a first principle, that the number of the house ought to remain the same; and that the reform of decayed boroughs ought not to proceed on disfranchisement. This he said was the third effort made by him, since he had the honor of a seat in Parliament, to prevail upon the legislature to adopt a reform in the representation of the people. He had

had twice failed in his endeavours to effect this salutary purpose; and yet he was not discouraged from renewing them this day: he was encouraged by two circumstances which he had not in his favor on the former occasions. The reform which he now meant to propose, was more consistent with the views of the best and most moderate men: and this was a new house of commons, that had never been consulted on the subject of reform, and consequently had not, like the two last, negatived a proposition made for introducing it. Therefore, though the subject might be thought stale by the public, as it had been so frequently agitated, it was perfectly new to the house of commons which he had then the honor to address.

That gentlemen should have set themselves against general and unqualified notions of reform he did not much wonder; and that they should be still more inimical to the vague, impracticable, and inconclusive chimeras which had been thrown out at different times by different reformers, he was not astonished. Reverencing the constitution, and feeling all the pride of an Englishman on the experience of its beauty, even with all its blemishes, it was no wonder that gentlemen should be alarmed at suggestions which were founded on no principle, and which admitted of no limit. But there were certain propositions, in which he had reason to think all men must coincide. If there were any specific means of purifying the state of representation on its first principle, without danger of altering the fabric, and without danger of leaving it either in uncertainty or disorder, such means ought, with becoming caution, to be used. On this clear and indisputable proposition it was that he wished to go. It was because he imagined that a plan might be formed congenial with the first principles of representation, which

would reform the present inadequate state, and provide in all future times for as adequate and perfect a state of representation as they could expect to arrive at in the present circumstances of the country. He was aware, when he spoke in this manner, that the idea of general and complete representation, so as to comprehend every individual, and give him his personal share in the legislature of the country, was a thing incompatible with the population, and state of the kingdom. The practicable definition of what the popular branch of our legislature was at this day, he took to be precisely this:—" An assembly freely elected, between whom and the mass of the people there was the closest union and most perfect sympathy. Such a house of commons it was the purpose of the constitution originally to erect, and such a house of commons it was the wish of every reformer now to establish. Those who went farther, those who went to ideas of individual representation, deluded themselves with impossibilities, and took the attention of the public from that sober and practicable path in which they might travel safely and with ease, to launch them into an unbounded sea, where they had no pilot to direct, and no star to guide them.

Solicitous as he was of reform, he never could countenance vague and unlimited notions. It was his wish to see the house adopt a sober and practicable scheme, which should have for its basis, the original principle of representation: and should produce the object which every lover of our constitution must have in view—a house of commons, between whom and the people there should exist the same interest, and the most perfect sympathy and union. It was his purpose to see, an arrangement made, which, while it corrected the present inadeqate state of representation, should keep it adequate when made so;

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and should give to the constitution purity, consistency, and, if possible, immortality. Such was the sanguine idea which he entertained from his project, and such, he trusted, would be the sentiment of the house upon its exposition. Whatever argument might be adduced against its practicability, and what against its expediency, he trusted that the old argument of innovation would not be alleged. As he had said, it was not an innovation; and he was sure that gentlemen would agree with him in this sentiment, when they turned their eyes back with him to the earliest periods of our history, and traced the practice of our ancestors in the purest days.

He considered it, on such a review, as one of the most indisputable doctrines of antiquity, that the state of representation was to be changed with the change of circumstances. As far back as the period of the reign of EDWARD I., which was the first time when they could trace distinct descriptions of men in the representation, the doctrine of change was clearly understood. The counties were not uniform: the number of members was frequently varied: and from that period to the reign of CHARLES II. there were few reigns in which representation was not varied, and in which it did not undergo diminutions or fluctuations of some kind or other. Those changes were owing to the discretion which was left in the executive branches of the legislature, to summon, or not to summon whom they pleased to Parliament. The executive branch of the legislature was vested with this discretion on no other principle, than that the places, which for the time being might have such a share in the general scale of the people, as should entitle them, or rather subject them, to the duty of sending members to the representative body, might be appointed to do so. In this very discretionary power the principle of alteration was visible,

visible, and it manifested the original notion which our forefathers had of representation to be this: That, whereas it was impossible that every individual of a populous country could make choice of a representative, the task should be committed to such bodies of men as might be collected together in communities in the several districts of the kingdom; and as such communities must from their nature be fluctuating and moveable, that the crown should have the discretion of pointing out which of them were proper from their size and scale to execute this duty for the rest. Every man must acknowledge, that to have exercised this discretion otherwise than soundly must have been an high grievance; and he needed not to say, that if it were now vested in the crown, and that ministers might fix on such places as they pleased for the choice of members, there was not a man in England, who would not consider the liberties of his country as extinguished. Such discretion, however, did exist, and he mentioned it to shew, that principles in representation had been departed from, and had their existence no longer. The argument against change was an argument against the experience of every period of our history. There had not been of late any addition to the county share in the representation, except indeed of the palatines, of the principality of Wales, and of another addition which had been made since the period at which it was common to say that our constitution was fixed, the revolution, namely, the addition of all that part of the united kingdom called Scotland.

But, in the borough representation, the changes had been infinitely more common. Gentlemen had undoubtedly read, that, of the boroughs which used formerly to send members to Parliament, seventy-two had been disfranchised, that was to say, that the crown had ceased to

summon them at general elections to return burgesses to the house of commons. After the restoration, thirty-six of these boroughs petitioned Parliament to be restored to the exercise of their ancient franchise: their prayer was granted, and to this day they continue to enjoy it. But the other thirty-six not having presented any petition on the subject, had not recovered their lost franchise. Upon this he would be bold to say, that considering the restoration of the former, and the continued deprivation of the latter, the spirit of the constitution had been grossly violated, if it was true (but which he denied) that the extension to one set of boroughs of the franchise of returning members to Parliament, and the resumption of it from others, was a violation of the constitution. For if the numbers could not originally have been constitutionally encreased, so they could not constitutionally have been diminished. But having been once diminished, to restore them might by some be said to make an innovation; and if the Parliament had any authority to restore the franchise, the principle of restoration ought to have been extended to the seventy-two boroughs, and not confined to one half of them. Here then it appeared manifest, that the whole was governed by a principle which militated directly against the modern doctrine, that to do what had been constantly done for ages, by the wisest of our ancestors, was to innovate upon the constitution. The seventy-two boroughs in question had discontinued to return members, because they had fallen into decay. Thirty-six of them afterwards recovered their franchise, when they recovered their former wealth and population; but the other thirty-six not having renovated their former vigor and consequence in the state, remained to this day deprived of their franchise which had been taken from them,

them, when they lost the wealth and population on account of which they had originally obtained it.

Why then was there a greater objection to any change in the representation of certain boroughs now, than there had been in former periods? Why were they more sacred now than the thirty-six boroughs which had been disfranchised, and which had no share at present in the representation of the country? The arguments that influenced gentlemen against any change at this time, would have equally operated against the thirty-six boroughs which had from time to time been extinguished, as well as against the same number, which, having been abolished, were from a change of their circumstances reinstated in their privileges. In those earlier periods, such was the notion of representation, that as one borough decayed, and another rose, the one was abolished, and the other invested with the right; and alterations took place from accident or caprice, which, however, so far as they went, stood good and valid. The alterations were not made by principle: they did not arise from any fixed rule laid down, and invariably pursued; but they were founded in that notion, which gave the discretionary power to the crown, viz. 'That the principal places, and not the decayed boroughs, should be called upon to exercise the right of election.'

He contended, therefore, that the same notion should now prevail, but that it should be rescued from that accident and caprice, in which it had before been involved; that the alteration should be made on principles, and that they should establish this as a clear and eternal axiom in representation, that it should always be the same; that it should not depend upon locality or name, but upon number and condition; and that a standard should be

fixed

fixed for its size. He would submit to the world which of the two were most anxious for the preservation of the original principle of the constitution, he who was for maintaining the exterior and name of representation, when the substance was gone, or he who, preferring the substance and reality of representation to the name and exterior, was solicitous of changing its seat from one part of the country to another, as one place might flourish, and another decay? It was his idea, that if they could deduce any good principles from theory, and apply them to practice, it was their duty to do so. It was then the theory, and it had been the practice in all times to adapt the representation to the state of the country; and this was exactly what it was his intention to recommend to the house. Now and in all future time to adapt the representation to the state of the country was the idea of reform which he entertained.

Perhaps gentlemen would be apt to exclaim, that this contradicted the declaration with which he set out, "that the plan which he meant to propose would be final and complete." When they came however to hear the whole of his idea, he trusted they would find that his proposition had in view not only an immediate reform, but that it comprehended an arrangement, which must operate in all future time and periods for the changes which in the nature of things must incessantly arise in a country like Britain. We wished to establish a permanent rule to operate like the discretion, out of which our present constitution had sprung. That discretion would be very improper to exist now, though in ruder times it was not so dangerous, when representation was rather a burthen than a privilege, rather a duty than an object of ambition. For that discretion he was no advocate; but he wished to remind gentlemen, that that discretionary power had never been

been wrested from the hands of the executive branch of the legislature, and that to this day there existed but the act of Union to prevent the crown from adding to, or diminishing, the number of that house. By the act of Union, the proportionate numbers for the two parts of the kingdom were fixed, and from the date of that act, but not till that act, the discretion of the crown was at an end.

The argument of withstanding all reformation, from the fear of the ill consequences that might ensue, made gentlemen come to a sort of compromise with themselves. "We are sensible of certain defects: we feel certain inconveniences in the present state of representation: but fearing that we may make it worse by alteration, we will be content with it as it is." This was a sort of argument to which he could not give his countenance. If gentlemen had at all times been content with this doctrine, the nation would have lost much of that excellence of which our constitution now had to boast. Who would say but that the excellence of the constitution was the fruit of constant improvement? To prove this fact required but little illustration. It was, for instance, a first principle in our constitution, that Parliament should meet as frequently as the exigencies of the state should require. This was a clear principle, but the periods were not fixed. Practice however had improved on this principle, and now it was established that Parliament should annually meet. Something like that which he meant now to recommend, did take place in very early periods of our history. It was remarkable that JAMES I., a Prince who mounted the throne with high ideas of prerogative, and who was not to be suspected of being too partial to the liberties of the subject, stated in his first proclamation for calling a Parliament, that the sheriffs of the counties should not direct such

such boroughs to send members, as were so utterly ruined as to be incapable or unintitled to contribute their share to the representation of the country. Another period of our history, which, whatsoever objection he might have to its general principles, had given rise to many salutary laws; he meant in the days of CROMWELL: it was declared by the Protector, that there should be a greater proportion of knights than of burgesses in the house of commons. He mentioned this authority (for which, as he had said, he had, in the general, no great reverence, whose opposition to CHARLES I. began in licentiousness, and proceeded as licentiousness always did, to tyranny) because it would shew, that whatever was his respect for the constitution of the country, his opinion evidently was, that representation should be proportioned to the people represented. Lord CLARENDON, in speaking of the plan of CROMWELL, had said, and it was to be found in his writings, "That it was worthy of a more warrantable authority, and of better times." From these circumstances, he thought that a doubt could not be left on the mind, but that it always had been the principle of representation that it should change with the changes which the country might endure, and that it should not be merely governed by exterior and local considerations.

Feeling, therefore, that this was the clear principle of representation, he begged the house to remember that he had told them in the outset that his plan was free from the objection of altering the number of the house, and also from the objection of making any change in the boroughs of disfranchisement: his plan consisted of two parts: the one was more immediate than the other, but they were both gradual. The first was calculated to procure an early, if not an immediate change, of the representation of the boroughs; and the second was intended

to establish a rule, by which the representation should change with the changes of the country. It was the clear and determined opinion of every speculatist, that there should be an alteration of the present proportion between the counties and boroughs, and that in the change, a larger proportion of members should be given for the populous places, than for places that had neither property, nor people.

It was therefore his intention to submit to the house to provide, that the members of a certain number of boroughs of the last description, that is of boroughs decayed, should be distributed among the counties. He would take the criterion, by which he should judge what boroughs were decayed from the number of houses; and this was a mode of judgment which was not liable to error, and which he conceived to be perfectly consistent with the original principle of representation. He should propose that these members should be transferred to the counties, beginning with those that stood in the greatest need of addition. Such a reform as this was in its nature limited; for if once the standard for the lowest county was fixed, the proportion for all must be the same, and it would be impossible to add more for any one county, than for the rest. In this view of the business, he imagined that the house would agree with him in thinking that there were about thirty-six boroughs so decayed as to come within the scheme of such an operation. Seventy-two would therefore be the number of members to be added to the counties, in such proportion as the wisdom of Parliament might direct; and this number it was his intention to propose should be fixed and unalterable. The operation must be gradual, as he intended that the boroughs should be disfranchised on their own voluntary application to Parliament. Gentlemen must be

be aware that a voluntary application to Parliament was not to be expected without an adequate consideration being given to the boroughs; and he trusted that gentlemen would not start at the idea of such a consideration being provided for. A reform could only be brought about by two means—by an act of power, or by an adequate consideration, which might induce bodies or individuals to part with rights which they considered as a species of valuable inheritance, or personal property. To a reform by violence, he, and he was sensible many others, had an insurmountable objection; but he considered a reform in the representation of the people an object of such value and importance, that he did not hesitate in his own mind to propose and to recommend to the house the establishment of a fund for the purpose of purchasing the franchise of such boroughs as might be induced to accept of it under the circumstances which he had mentioned. It might be asked, what the consideration could be for such a franchise? He knew there was a sort of squeamish and maiden coyness about the house in talking on this subject: they were not very ready to talk in that house on what at the same time it was pretty well understood, out of doors they had no great objection to negotiate, the purchase and the sale of seats. But he would fairly ask gentlemen, if these sort of franchises were not capable of being appreciated? and whether, notwithstanding all the proud boast of its being an insult to an Englishman to ask him to sell his invaluable franchise, there were not abundance of places, where, without imputing immorality to any individual, such franchises might be purchased? Could it not be proved, that in this country estates so situated as to command an influence in a decayed and depopulated borough, and to have the power of returning two members to parliament, sold for more money than

they would have done if situated in any other place, however luxuriant the soil might be, however productive its harvests? Unless, indeed, its harvests could occasionally produce a couple of members, its intrinsic value was less. There were many reasons why men might be induced to surrender this franchise. In some instances, where the right of returning members was attached to the possession of an estate, and where it might be considered as an inheritance, giving to the possessor the power of doing so much good to his country, he might warrantably and honorably accept of a valuable consideration, since, by the use of the equivalent, he might be equally serviceable to the community. In some instances, persons enjoyed the franchise in consequence of a life right; and enjoying it only for their lives, interest would naturally induce them to accept of a consideration: others enjoyed it by a still more temporary tenure, merely by the circumstance of local residence; and to them, therefore, it must be an opportunity which they would covet to embrace. Seeing the matter therefore in these points of view, he had no doubt in his own mind but that the boroughs to which he alluded would voluntarily surrender their franchise to Parliament on such consideration being given. He should propose that the fund to be established should be divided into two parts; and that it should be stipulated, that a larger sum should be given for perpetuities than for temporary rights. He had stated before, that this operation would not be immediate, at least to the full extent; but he had reason to believe that it would neither be slow nor distant.

The second part of his plan was to provide, that after the full and final operation of the first proposition, that is, after the extinction of thirty-six boroughs, and the transfer of their members to the county representation, if there still should remain any borough so small and so

decayed as to fall within the size to be fixed on by Parliament, such borough should have it in its power to surrender its franchise on an adequate consideration; and that the right of sending members to Parliament should be transferred to such populous and flourishing towns as might desire to enjoy the right; and that this rule should remain good and operate in all future time, be applied to such boroughs as in the fluctuating state of a manufacturing and commercial kingdom might fall into decay in one part of the country, and rise into condition in another. These propositions, taken together, comprehended what he conceived to be a final and complete system, and which would ease the minds of gentlemen with respect to any future scheme of reform being attempted, or being necessary. This was not a plan of reform either fluctuating or changeable. It was not subject to the argument that the stirring of this question would lead to endless innovations, and that when once involved in a change there was no foreseeing where we might stop; nor was it subject to the objection, that it was an innovation; for he had very much failed in making his own ideas intelligible to the house, if he had not shewn them, that it was a plan in every respect congenial not only with the first principle, but with the uniform practice of the constitution. These arguments, therefore, he trusted, would not be brought against his plan. The argument whether his propositions were practicable, whether they were susceptible of an easy and early execution, he should be happy to hear and discuss. But all the arguments that had been brought from time to time against general and unexplained notions, as they were not applicable he trusted they would not be adduced.

He anticipated several objections, which, when the propositions came to be discussed in the detail, he should be

happy to meet and to combat. The first he supposed would be the argument of the expence. Certainly it would always be wise and proper for that house to guard against wild and chimerical schemes and speculations, which might involve their constituents in additional burthens; but he did not believe, that, in a matter so dear and important to Englishmen, they would be intimidated from embracing it by the circumstance of the cost. He conceived it to be above price: it was a thing which the people of England could not purchase too highly. Let gentlemen set the question in its proper point of view; let them oppose to the expence however great, the probable, and indeed the almost certain advantages to accrue from it; and then they would see how little the argument of œconomy ought to weigh against the purification of the popular branch of the legislature. If there always had been an house of commons who were the faithful stewards of the interests of their country, the diligent checks on the administration of the finances, the constitutional advisers of the executive branch of the legislature, the steady and uninfluenced friends of the people, he asked, if the burthens which the constituents of that house were now doomed to endure, would have been incurred? Would the people of England have suffered the calamities to which they had lately been made subject? And feeling this great and melancholy truth, would they consider the divestment of any sum as an object, when by doing so, such a house of commons might be ascertained? He did not therefore think that the argument of the expence would be so much insisted on, nor indeed would the expence be so great, as on the first blush of the matter, gentlemen might be apt to imagine.

Another objection that he foresaw was, that the operation would be but gradual, and its full and final accomplish-

ment at least be distant. This however was not an objection that could have much weight. He did not believe that the operation would either be slow or very distant. He had stated to the house several reasons to shew that the different descriptions of men would have an interest in accepting the conditions to be offered by Parliament; and in the fluctuating state of property, and in the almost constant necessities of men, he argued that the offer of the consideration would from time to time be irresistible. He was sanguine perhaps in saying, that before next Parliament, the benefit of this plan might be felt; and, in the mean time, this objection to the plan being gradual would be less regarded from the confidence which the people of England had in their present representatives. They would wait with patience for the operation of this arrangement from the confidence which they had in the truth and character of the present Parliament. It was elected under circumstances which made it dear to Englishmen: it had not yet forfeited the confidence of the country; and he was warranted in presuming, that, with such a house of commons, the constituent body would not be eager for the immediate accomplishment of this reform.

He said, that in the proposed change of representation, and in adding seventy-two members to the counties, he forgot in the proper place to mention, that it was his wish to add to the number of electors in those counties. There was no good reason why copyholders should not be admitted to the exercise of the franchise as well as freeholders. Their property was as secure; and indeed in some instances more so, than that of the freeholders; and such an accession to the body of electors would give an additional energy to representation. He conceived that the addition of seventy-two members would be as much as it would be proper to give to the proportion between

county and borough. These seventy-two members would be divided between the counties and the metropolis, as nothing could be more evident than that the cities of London and Westminster, as well as the counties, had a very inadequate share in the representation of the kingdom. To give to the counties and the metropolis a greater addition than seventy-two members, or thereabouts, would be the means of introducing disorders into the election more injurious than its present inadequacy.

He needed not, he believed, enumerate the arguments that presented themselves to his mind in favor of a reform. Every gentleman, who had taken pains to investigate the subject, must see that it was most materially wanted. To conquer the corruption that existed in those decayed boroughs would be acknowledged an impossible attempt. The temptations were too great for poverty to resist; and the consequence of this corruption was so visible, that some plan of reforming the boroughs had clearly become absolutely necessary. In times of calamity and distress, how truly important was it to the people of this country, that the house of commons should sympathise with themselves, and that their interests should be indissoluble? It was most material that the people should have confidence in their own branch of the legislature: the force of the constitution as well as its beauty depended on that confidence, and on the union and sympathy which existed between the constituent and representative. The source of our glory and the muscles of our strength were the pure character of freedom which our constitution bore. To lessen that character, to taint it, was to take from our vitals a part of their vigor, and to lessen not only our importance but our energy with our neighbours.

If we looked back to our history, we should find that the brightest periods of its glory and triumph were those

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in which the house of commons had the most complete confidence in their ministers, and the people of England the most complete confidence in the house of commons. The purity of representation was the only true and permanent source of such confidence; for though occasionally bright characters had arisen, who, in spite of the general corruption and depravity of the day in which they lived, had manifested the superior influence of integrity and virtue, and had forced both parliament and people to countenance their administration, yet it would be unwise for the people of England to leave their fate to the chance of such characters often arising, when prudence must dictate that the certain way of securing their properties and freedom was to purify the sources of representation, and to establish that strict relation between themselves and the house of commons, which it was the original idea of the constitution to create. He hoped that the plan which he had mentioned was likely to re-establish such a relation; and he recommended to gentlemen not to suffer their minds to be alarmed by unnecessary fears. Nothing was so hurtful to improvement as the fear of being carried farther than the principle on which a person set out.

It was common for gentlemen to reason with themselves, and to say, that they would have no objection to go so far and no farther, if they were sure that in countenancing the first step, they might not either be led themselves, or lead others farther than they intended to go. So much they were apt to say was right: so far they would go: of such a scheme they approved: but fearing that it might be carried too far, they desisted from doing even what they conceived to be proper. He deprecated this conduct, and hoped that gentlemen would come to the consideration of this business without fearing that it would lead to consequences, that would either ruin or alarm

 us.

us. He begged pardon for having troubled the house so long: he wished to put them in possession of all his ideas on the important subject, though he was aware, that until the matter came to be argued in the detail, it was impossible for him to foresee all the objections that might be stated. He should therefore conclude for the present with moving, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people of England in Parliament."

The principal speakers against the motion were Lord NORTH, and Mr. POWIS, the declared enemies of all reform. Mr. POWIS in particular ridiculed the whole plan as the mere "knight errantry of a political Quixotte. It was an example, a precedent, an incitement to the wildest and most paradoxical *nostrums* that speculative theorists could devise. They got by it what ARCHIMEDES wanted, a foundation for their inventions, a *fulcrum* from which they could throw the Parliament and constitution of England into the air. He could not contemplate it with any degree of patience. He should not treat it therefore with the ceremony calling for the order of the day; but as its purposes were so hostile to the constitution, so menacing and unqualified, he would meet the question in front, by giving it a direct and unequivocal contradiction."

Mr. WILBERFORCE replied to Lord NORTH and Mr. POWIS, when the attention of the house was immediately directed to the following speech of Mr. FOX:

"After the many occasions, on which I have before expressed what my sentiments are on the subject of a reform in the representation of the people in Parliament, I shall not consider myself under any great necessity of troubling the house; but there have been extraordinary circumstances attending the introduction of the present question. That I have always been a friend to the principle of the bill is a fact which does not require to be

now

now repeated. Whether the means taken to effect that principle are such as are most unexceptionable, must remain for future discussion, but cannot provoke my opposition to the motion. There remain ample opportunities in the future stages of the Bill to examine and correct it; —opportunities which in themselves will be the highest acquisition. In the review which has been taken of the question this night, there are means used to implicate the American war in the subject now under discussion, by suggesting that it was supported by the influence of burgage tenures, and that if they had been withdrawn, that war would have had a more speedy termination. I acknowledge that it would have been in the power of the Parliament to bring that war to a period, had they considered it was an improper one; but the manner, in which it must have been done, would be such as I should little expect to hear recommended from the gentlemen on the other side of the house. When the delay of a few days in passing the supplies was represented last year as the most heinous proceeding. What would have been the enormity of stopping not the ordnance supply, as was the case, but all the other supplies also, as would be the case in the event which might here take place. This would be a conduct worthy of a Parliament in certain situations, and would shew them to be sensible of their due weight, and importance in the scale of the constitution, and not the instruments of a superior power, kept for no other purpose but to register edicts, and perform an annual routine. Much has been said of the merit of dissolving that cohesion which has been said to subsist in the parties in this house. That cohesion does subsist, is a truth in which I take too much pride to think of denying, and from which this country derives too much advantage to be an enemy to: my connections were formed on liberal

and

and systematic principles, and could not be dissolved by any regulations, while the same union in sentiments and principles continued to cement them. When an honorable gentleman said, that parties on one side of the house occasioned similar engagements on the other, he should have considered that it equally applied to one as to the other; but there might be some circumstances which might induce that honorable gentleman to look forward, with eagerness to the dissolution of such attachments, if they obliged him to support and defend measures, in which his opinions did not correspond: if they forced him to act one way, and think another. Under such circumstances it was perfectly natural that he should pant to be disengaged from such connections, and resign the load which seemed so much to oppress him. To that principle which by a diminution of the members of boroughs tended to encrease the proportion of representatives for counties, I am sincerely and cordially a friend. But while I am thus explicit on the subject of my approbation, it is but just to mention, that there is another point to which I totally disagree. With all respect which I always pay to the house of commons, I can perceive in it no superlative excellence, no just superiority, which can justify the suspension of the operation of this bill. To defer for a period of years any system of reform, however partial and inadequate, is by no means complying with the declared wishes of the majority of the electors of this country, whose voice, though by no means to be acknowledged as that to which the house of commons must conform, when they are directed by any sudden impulse as the opinions of a moment, should always be obeyed on points which the experience and consideration of years have taught them finally to decide on. The people, notwithstanding all that has been said, have no peculiar obligations to

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this Parliament for uncommon instances of that propriety of conduct, which could warrant so implicit a reliance in it. No very flattering proofs of extraordinary attention to the rights of the people have been given by his Majesty's present ministers, in their support of that excellent measure the *Westminster scrutiny;* and no very splendid testimony of their prudence in financial concerns could be drawn from the *commutation tax.* This is a proceeding, the hardship of which they have already felt; and there are some others now in agitation, which are not likely to turn out much more favorable. These only are the reasons the people can have for a reliance in their present Parliament. I do not however mean to say any thing which can be construed as invective against them. I have before been accused of insulting them. I do not know that I did so; but if heat should have led me at any time to say any thing which could have that appearance, I am exceedingly sorry for it. There was nothing in any of these circumstances which could impress them on my memory; but I have observed, that nothing I have ever said in my warmest moments has ever drawn forth so much passion and ill temper on the other side of the house, as when I have attempted to praise them. The Right Honorable Gentleman has in this instance receded from those opinions which on two former occasions he seemed to maintain; and the alteration which he has now made for the purpose of a specific plan is infinitely for the worse. It is in vain that he endeavours to qualify the objections which the idea of innovation raises in the minds of some, by diminishing the extent and influence of reformation. From the earliest periods of our government, that principle of innovation, but which should more properly be called amendment, is neither more nor less than the practice of the constitution. In every species of government,

government, for I will put absolute monarchy out of the question, as one which ought never to take place in any country, democracy and aristocracy are always in a state of gradual improvement, when experience comes to the aid of theory, and speculation.

"In all these the voice of the people, when deliberately and generally collected, is invariably sure to succeed. There are moments of periodical impulse and delusion, in which they should not be gratified; but when the views of a people have been formed and determined on the attainment of any object, they must ultimately succeed. On this subject the people of this country have petitioned from time to time, and their applications have been made to their Parliament. In every reason therefore they should be gratified, lest they may be inclined to sue for redress in another quarter, where their application will have every probability of success, from the experience of last year. Failing in their representatives, they may have recourse to their prerogative. It has been urged, that now, whilst this business is in agitation, the people of Birmingham and Manchester have not petitioned to be represented. This is an argument which at this time of all others can have but little weight; for while they are alarmed for their trade and their subsistance, it is no time for them to set about making improvements in that constitution, in which they are not certain how long they may have any share. On the eve of emigration, they are to look for this in another country, to which their property and business are soon to be transferred. The different parts of this plan would certainly in a committee be submitted to modification and amendments; but as it now stands admitting only the first principle, every other part and the means taken to attain the principle are highly objectionable. I shall not

not hesitate to declare, that I will never agree to admit the purchasing from a majority of the electors the property of the whole. In this I see so much injustice, and so much repugnance to the true spirit of our constitution, that I cannot entertain the idea one moment. On the other hand, when the property of a borough is in one man, there is no chance of his disposing of it on the terms this day mentioned; for when a particular sum is laid down for a certain purchase, and interest suffered to accumulate on that sum, the man must be a fool who could be in haste to get the possession of it. There is something injurious in holding out pecuniary temptations to an Englishman to relinquish his franchise on the one hand, and a political principle which equally forbids it on another. I am uniformly of an opinion, which, though not a popular one, I am ready to aver, that the right of governing is not a property, but a trust; and that whatever is given for constitutional purposes, should be resumed when those purposes shall no longer be carried into effect. There are instances of gentlemen offering to sacrifice the interest they may have in boroughs to the public good. It is strange that none of them now come forward, when the occasion has presented itself. I am averse to the idea of confining parliamentary situations to men of large fortunes, or those who have distinguished themselves in public professions. Should this be the case, there is scarcely any man so little acquainted with the history of Parliament, as not to know that the house would lose half its force. It is not from men of large and easy fortunes that attention, vigilance, energy, and enterprize are to be expected. Human nature is too fond of gratification not to be somewhat attentive to it, when the means are at hand; and the best and most meritorious public services have always been performed

performed by persons in circumstances removed from opulence. The Right Honorable Gentleman need not be ashamed to take some of those regulations formed in the time of the protector, OLIVER CROMWELL; for though a character too odious ever to be the object of praise or imitation, his institutions, confirmed afterwards by his successor, CHARLES II., bear strong marks of genius and ability; for his political disposition was as good as that of his successor, and his genius infinitely more powerful. I shall conclude with earnestly intreating all sides of the house to concur in the question now before them."

I am sorry the honorable gentleman who spoke last [Mr. WILBERFORCE] did not, in all the warmth he professed on the occasion, take the most conciliatory mode of acquiring strength to it. Instead of reproaching the noble Lord [NORTH] for confining himself to arguments and observations, he should rather tremble for the success with which these old observations have been applied by his noble friend, and the contrary fate which has before attended the novel and more variable stile of the minister.

After a long protracted debate, the question was lost by a majority of 248 voices against 174.

In March 1790, Mr. FLOOD, who had before distinguished himself by eloquent exertions in support of parliamentary reform in Ireland, moved for leave to bring into the British senate a plan for the improvement of the national representation; which he thus explained, and endeavoured to recommend.

"SIR,

"I rise to propose a reform in the parliamentary representation of the people. I cannot mention the subject without making you sensible of its importance: it is surrounded

surrounded with difficulties, some that are inherent in the subject, and more that do not in reality belong to it; difficulties of private interest in the prepossessions of those, who having benefited by the perversion of the constitution, are unwilling to restore it. To such persons I have but one application to make, and that is, that they will suspend those prepossessions till they hear what I have to propose; and then, if they find they can do a noble justice to their country, without a personal injury to themselves, that they will receive, or at least that they will examine it. There is another sentiment which I wish to obviate, and that is, that it is preposterous for any man to attempt a reform, in which some years ago the chancellor of the Exchequer did not succeed. Bowing to the superiority of the chancellor of the Exchequer, my answer is plain: First, that I have avoided the objections that militated most strongly against his plan;—next, that the lights, which he has thrown upon the subject, are a great assistance now;—that his declared patronage of the principle, as well as that of his right honorable antagonist, are a farther encouragement; seeing that it cannot be supposed that persons of their talents and information, who differ in so many other things, should concur in this, if it were not for the overbearing force of an irresistible conviction. I have to add, that such a principle, so vital to the constitution, and yet so strongly opposed by private interest, is the very thing that cannot be supposed to succeed at once; but that it is the very thing of which we may be certain, that, with due perseverance, it will succeed in the end. For myself I shall only say, that I have too much confidence in the magnanimity and wisdom of this house, and of the people of England, not to trust, that they will rather consider the

the weight of the matter than the weakness of the mover.

"Under these auspices I begin, and will say what, but in a confidence in your virtue, I dare not say, that you are not the adequate representatives of the people.

"That you are their legal representatives I freely admit, and that as such you were entitled, as well as any other house of commons, to all that was resolved, with respect to your powers, in the last session of Parliament. And I appeal to the candor of the chancellor of the Exchequer, who I am sure will readily acknowledge, that the words *full and free Parliament*, that were used on this occasion, were not used indirectly to anticipate the present question; nor to declare the adequacy of that represensation, the inadequacy of which he has himself arraigned. But I go farther, and say, that you are not only the legal representatives of the people, but that you are an highly useful and honorable council—a council, which, in any other government of Europe, would be a great a acquisition! But, to the honor of the British constitution be it spoken, that the British constitution entitles us to something better; namely; an adequate representation; now this it cannot be, unless freely, and frequently elected by the body of the people. Before I go farther into this subject, however, I must stop to notice a declaration of the right honourable member (Mr. Fox) that he was an enemy to absolute government, whether in the form of monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. I go farther, and am an enemy to any two of those orders combined, without the intervention of the third. And though I do not distinguish between any of the three, so as to express a preference; yet I have a right to say, that, as all just government must be founded in the choice of the people,

people, and must have their benefit for its end, so it is clear that the popular order of government is at least as indispensible, and as valuable as either of the others. Now what is the popular form of government in the British constitution? It is the representaion of the people; that great arcanum and wise mystery of our government, by which it so much excels all the governments of antiquity. By this principle, though scattered over a great country, a great people can possess an efficient influence in their own Legislature, without being Legislators themselves. But how? Not by the shadow, but by the substance of representation; or, in other words, by an actual and not a virtual representative. Now, in what does actual representation consist? In this, that as, by the general law of the constitution, the majority is to decide for the whole, the representative must be chosen by a body of constituents, whereof the elective franchise may extend to the majority of the people. For what can be so evident, as that, if the constituent body consisted but of one thousand for the whole nation, the representatives chosen by that thousand could not, in any rational sense, be the actual representative of the people? It is equally dear in reason, that nothing less than a constituent body, formed on a principle that may extend to the majority, can be constitutionally adequate to the return of an actual representative of the people; and that unless the people be actually represented, they are not constitutionally represented at all. I admit, that property, to a certain degree, is a necessary ingredient to the elective power; that is to say, that franchise ought not to go beyond property; but at the same time to say, that it ought to be as nearly commensurate to it as possible. Property, by the original principle of the constitution, was the source of all power, both elective, and legislative; the *liberi tenentes* including

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at that time, in effect, the whole property of the country, and extending to the mass of the people, were the elective body. The persons, whom they chose to Parliament, sat in right of the property of their electors; and the barons sat in right of their own baronies; that is to say, of their own property. At that time, they were not creatures of royal patent, as now. But now that the Lords are creatures of royal patent merely, and that freehold property is a very inferior part of the property of the nation, the national property is not as fully represented as it was originally, and as it ought to be still by the constitution. The constituent body is also defective in point of number, as well as in point of property. The whole number of electors is infinitely short of what it ought to be, and what is worse, the majority of the representatives, who decide for the whole, are chosen by a number of electors not exceeding six or eight thousand; though these representatives are to act for eight millions of people. A new body of constituents is therefore wanting; and in their appointment, two things are to be considered; one, that they should be numerous enough, because numbers are necessary to the spirit of liberty; the other, that they should have a competent degree of property, because that is conducive to the spirit of order. To supply this deficiency both in the representative and constituent body, my proposition shall be directed.

"But I am told this is not the time. And why? because forsooth there are disturbances in France. Now, first I say, that if those disturbances were ten times greater than with every exaggeration they are represented to be, yet that mass of confusion and ruin would only render the argument more completely decisive in favor of a timely and temperate reform here. And why? because it is only from want of timely and temperate reform there,

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that these evils have fallen upon France. They could not begin with reparation in France; there was nothing to repair; they did not begin with ruin, they found ruin accomplished to their hands. Neither the King nor his ministers knew where to find the constitution. The King called upon his notables (no legal body) to see where the constitution was to be found. Not a vestige of it could be recovered. They had lived so long as slaves, that they had unlearned the constitution: they were driven to speculation, because practice had vanished; and hence all those calamities which have excited such tragical exclamations here.

"To what have the convulsions in former times in England been owing? To the same want of timely and temperate correction. Had the encroachments of the TUDORS been seasonably repressed, CHARLES the First might not have mistaken those usurpations to be his constitutional prerogative; and so the miseries of the nation might have been avoided. Had not the evil practices of CHARLES the Second been so tamely endured, as to encourage the tyranny of JAMES, the last revolution might not have become necessary. I am no friend to revolutions, because they are an evil: I am therefore a friend to timely reform; and for this reason, that it renders revolutions unnecessary; whilst they who oppose such reform may be enemies to revolutions in their hearts, but they are friends to it by their folly. Another strong argument from the situation of France in favor of a reform is this, that France will improve her constitution. Now what has enabled this country to be at all times equal, and oftentimes superior to France? Not her climate or soil, which are not superior; nor her territory, nor population, which are so greatly inferior: it is only in the excellence of her government she has found her superiority. What follows? That if France improves her government, you

must restore yours. Again—what is your situation as to external danger? France, the great object of external danger to England, can no longer give alarm: during her disturbances she cannot have the power; and after her liberty is established, she will not have the inclination to make ambitious war. The better her government is, the more rational will be her counsels; the more rational her counsels, the more pacific they will be. Kings may hope for glory, and their ministers and minions may hope for plunder from warfare; but what can the people expect from an ambitious war? Nothing, but an accumulation of taxes, and an effusion of blood. Now, if a state of external danger would be a strong argument against a reform, a state of external safety is as strong an argument in its favor. Again—what is your situation at home? You are not in a state of despondency, on the one hand, that might tempt you to a measure of despair, nor in a state on the other hand, of that drunken prosperity, by which nations are rendered ignorant of the present, and regardless of the future. You are in that happy medium, which is the best friend to sobriety of judgment, and consequently the fittest state for framing a rational and temperate reform, the only one which I would propose, and the only one to which I would consent. But it is dangerous, it is said, to tell the people of England, that they are not duly represented! And is this indeed a secret? Are the people of England in such a state of infancy as not to know, that they do not elect those representatives for whom they do not vote? No—but if ever it was a secret to them, it has long been divulged; it was proclaimed to them in a loud voice in the Middlesex Election, when a minority was voted to be a majority—a determination so iniquitous as to shake the fabric of Parliament to its base. What was the consequence? The house of commons, in a moment of repentance, erased the record

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of it, and stripped themselves for ever of their former judicial power in elections, in expiation, and contrition for this abuse of it. Now what was this abuse? It was making a minority do in one county, what could only be constitutionally done by a majority; and the danger of it in example was, that it might be extended to other counties. But what is the abuse of which I complain, when I complain of the inadequacy of representation? It is, that a very small minority of the people do now act for the whole in electing the entire representative of the nation. Now this is as much a greater abuse than the former, as the whole is greater than a ſmall part; and as one was expunged by the Parliament, the other ought to be expunged by the people. Again—this secret of inadequate representation was told to the people in thunder in the American war; which began with virtual representation, and ended in dismemberment. To the inadequacy of representation, I charge that war.

"Profuse councils, attendant on unconstitutional majorities, had left upon you a debt, which induced the minister to look to America for taxes. There the war began: the instinctive selfishness of mankind made the people and Parliament wish that others should be taxed rather than themselves. At first, and until America resisted, I agree that this wish was common to the Parliament and people; but when America resisted, and the measure came to deliberate judgment, the people were the first to recover their senses; whilst the minister, with his majority, went on to ruin. I say, that the inadequacy of representation, as it was the cause, so it was the only argument that was attempted in justification of that war. When the American exclaimed, that he was not represented in the British house of commons, because he was not an elector, he was told, that a very small part of the people of Eng-

land were electors; and that therefore he was in the same state in which an infinite majority of the people of England were placed. As they could not call this actual, they invented a new name for it, and called it virtual representation; and gravely concluded that America was represented. The argument no doubt was fallacious; it was perfectly sufficient, however, to impose on multitudes in a nation, wishing that others should be taxed rather than themselves; and who were in the habit of thinking that the Americans being an inferior species of beings, they ought to be contented with their situation, though they did not partake at all in the elective capacity. The influence of corruption within doors, and of this fraud of argument without, continued the American war.

"It terminated in separation, as it began in this empty vision of a virtual representation; and in its passage from one of these points to the other, it swept away part of the glory, and more of the territory of great Britain, with the loss of forty thousand lives, and one hundred millions of treasure. Virtual Parliaments, and an inadequate representation, have cost you enough abroad already; take care they do not cost you more at home, by costing you your constitution.

"But the people of England have not only read this secret in the dead and decisive letter of events, but they have imbibed it from the living oracles of their ablest statesmen. When the city of London, the greatest and freest metropolis of the world, applied to Lord Chatham to assist them in shortening the duration of Parliaments, what was the answer of that great minister?—It was this, 'That shortening the duration of Parliaments alone would not be sufficient; that alone might do hurt; that the representation itself must be amended;' and his proposition was, to infuse a fresh portion of vigor into

the representative body, by an addition of county representatives, leaving the rotten boroughs to drop off by time.

"The authority of the son, both when a minister, and when not a minister, has been added to that of the father. The authority of many other of the most eminent men, might be cited in addition, indeed of all, except those who are wise enough to startle at restoring, as if it were innovating, the constitution; and who grow enamoured of abuses, provided they are old.

"I now come to a remedy for these abuses—but first, I will remind you of the objections that have been made to the former propositions upon this subject; because it is the shortest method of shewing, that my proposition is free from them. It was not objected to Lord CHATHAM's plan, that it would make a considerable encrease to the present number of representatives; but it was objected, that the freeholders were already represented—that his plan did not give franchise to any of that great and responsible body of men, who are now non-electors—that, on the contrary, it encreased the disparity between them and the freeholders—and farther, it was objected, that this might happen that as so many more of the great interests in each county might be accommodated by this greater number of seats, which were to be disposed of by the same number of freeholders, that those greater interests might more probably combine—that the independent freeholders might become less significant, and county elections thereby become less influenced and less constitutional than at present. To the plan of the Chancellor of the Exchequer it was not objected, that he introduced a new body of electors, namely, the copyholders. It was admitted, that, by adding them to the freeholders, he had diminished, for so much, the objections that had been

made to his father's plan; but that, except for so much, the same objections remained as to that part of the subject. Touching his plan, as to the boroughs it was objected, that to disfranchise them, might indeed be arbitrary; but that to buy them out would be to build reform, not on the purity, but corruption of franchise;—that the purchase might never be effected;—that certainly it must be slow;—and that the worst boroughs, those of the government, would never resign, but would be comparatively encreased in their importance by the resignation of others;—that the reform was to wait for the result of all these contingencies;—and at all events, that it was not to begin till the expiration of the Parliament, which had but just commenced; during all which time it would lie open to be repealed, before it began to operate.

"My proposition is free from all these objections; for it is, that one hundred members should be added, and that they should be elected by a numerous and new body of responsible electors; namely, the resident householders in every county-resident. I say, because that the principle of the constitution is so strongly in favor of residence, that it ordained that no non-resident could be an elector; and with reason, first, because residents must be best acquainted with every local circumstance; and next, because they can attend at every place of election with the least inconvenience and expence to themselves or to the candidate. Householders, I say, because being masters, or fathers of families, they must be sufficiently responsible to be entitled to franchise. There is no country in the world in which the householders of it are considered as the rabble—no country can be said to be free, where they are not allowed to be efficient citizens; they are exclusive of the rabble, the great mass of the people; they are the natural guards of popular liberty in the first stages of

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it—without them it cannot be retained; as long as they have this constitutional influence, and till they become generally corrupt, popular liberty cannot be taken away. Whenever they do become generally corrupt, it cannot be retained, neither will it be long possessed, if they have not this constitutional influence; for the liberty of a nation like the honor of individuals, can never be safe but in their own custody. The householders of this country have a better right to consideration and franchise, than those of any other country, because they pay more for it. It is admitted, that every individual of this country, one with another, pays fifty shillings a year to the revenue in tax. The master or father of a family must contribute in proportion, for himself and for each individual of his family, even to the child that is hanging at the breast. Who shall say, that this class of men ought to be confounded with the rabble? Who shall dare to say, that they ought to be proscribed from franchise? They maintain the affluence of the rich, the dignity of the noble, the majesty of the crown; they support your fleets and your armies. And who shall say, that they shall not have this right to protect their liberty?

"I have stated the inadequacy of the representative body, compared with the constituent body, even as it now stands: I have stated the inadequacy of the constituent body itself, as it now is, compared with what it ought to be. I shall now state the effect of this double inadequacy upon the balance of the constitution. The constitution consists of three orders, one monarchical, one aristocratic, and one popular: the balance consists in maintaining the equipoise between them. This balance was l[illegible] in the first part of the Norman æra; it was recovere[illegible] in some degree after; it was impaired again in the period of the TUDORS and the STUARTS; at the revolution

tion it is supposed to have been again recovered. Let us see whether it has not been impaired since. The Lords have been the most stationary part; yet by a great increase of their numbers of late, the upper house has obtained a great many patrimonial and private boroughs, thereby obtaining an influence over the house of commons, which does not constitutionally belong to them. But the great alteration has happened on the part of the crown. And here, for brevity, I will appeal to the authority of a great Judge, that is no more. Mr. Justice BLACKSTONE has stated all the cautionary provisions that have been made to guard against prerogative; he has then enumerated the various sources of influence which have accrued to the crown in place of those prerogatives; and the conclusion of such a man, a lawyer, looking to be a judge; of principles sufficiently monarchical; writing in his closet, and appealing to the cool justice of the latest posterity, is, what? That influence has gone so far beyond prerogative, that at the moment he wrote, the liberty of England was rather to be found in the virtue of the Prince, than in the strength of the constitution. And what remedy does he intimate? An amendment in the representation of Parliament. Mr. HUME, a prerogative writer, taking the same view of the subject, has said, 'that the euthanasy of the British constitution must be arbitrary power!' What did the house of commons say in their memorable resolution? 'That the influence of the crown had encreased, was encreasing, and ought to be diminished.' Does any man doubt this authority? Were they not witnesses of the fact as well as judges of the proposition? But it does not rest on their authority; an act of the whole Legislature has since confirmed their words—they have been made statute by the act of reform, that passed afterwards. But what has happened since? An East India bill has passed,

and a declaratory law; and what is the consequence? That no man, who has any modesty, or who ever expects to be credited, will deny that by those laws more influence has been conveyed to the crown or the minister, than was subtracted by that act of reform. The little influence of the whole people on the representative body is thus noticed by SHERLOCK, a bishop. In his treatise on the test, and corporation laws, he says, 'That though the dissenters were but a twentieth part of the people, yet if they got into corporations, the petty boroughs being so numerous, they might by them obtain a majority in the house of commons against the whole nation.' 'In a word, it is undeniable, that a great majority of the house of commons are under another influence than that of the people. It is nonsense to call this a representation of the people: the balance of the constitution is therefore gone: it must be restored, or the constitution will be undone. The only thing to be decided is, how it may be restored? It may be restored by opening all the boroughs, so as to make them places of popular and constitutional election. But will private interest hear of that? No—What follows? That there is but one mode left for restoring the balance, and that is by an additional body of constitutional representatives, chosen by an additional body of constitutional electors.—Either then, this must be done, or the evil must continue; nor will that be all; for, according to the nature of the evil, it will propagate itself till it overwhelms what remains of your constitution. Is the addition of members objected to? It was not objected to Lord CHATHAM. It was not argued, that the integrity or wisdom of Parliament was confined to the number of five hundred and fifty-eight. No. It was felt, that this house is never tumultuary, but when it ceases to be a public, by becoming a party assembly. It was therefore felt, that as by the super-addition of such members,

members, this house would become more a public, and less a party assembly, it would by course become less tumultary, and rise in dignity and order. But if this be a serious objection, remove it; there are an hundred boroughs that might be limited to the return of one representative instead of two.—I do not propose it; but I desire that you will either propose it, or not object this addition to me. In a word, the people have lost their constitutional influence in the Legislature. Instead of having the whole, they are far from having a majority in their own representative; the majority is against them; and the majority decides for the whole. The house is a second rate aristocracy, instead of a popular representation: the pillar of the constitution is undermined; it is nonsense to say, that every thing is well, when every thing is in danger; every country in Europe was once as free as England; in every country of Europe it was said, that every thing was well, till they found that every thing was otherwise; they went to bed saying they were free, and they wakened bondmen.

"Let us not flatter ourselves, that there is a destiny peculiar to England; she has lost her liberty more than once; it is our business to take care, that they shall never lose it again. MACHIAVEL says wisely, that no free government can last, that is not often brought back to its first principles—and why? Because the excellence of a free government is to control the evil passions, and practices of rulers. What is the consequence? Those passions and practices are at perpetual war with such a constitution, they make a constant effort to undermine or evade this barrier which is opposed to them. What is perpetually assailed, must be perpetually defended: what is incessantly sapped, must be incessantly repaired. It is nonsense to say, that the English constitution, because it was

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once the best in the world, can never want reformation. A bad government cannot easily become worse; it therefore may not want, and certainly does not deserve reparation. A good government does easily become worse; it is with difficulty it can be preserved, even by vigilance; and of all things in the world it best deserves to be repaired. The proposition which I make to you, is practicable; that cannot be denied; it cannot be denied to be efficient; it will add a body of responsible constituents, of such a number that a majority of the people may have the exercise of franchise; thus it cures the defect of the constitutent body; and on the representative body it will have this good effect, that there will be no longer a decided majority in the house of commons under another choice and another influence than that of the people; it leaves every county, city, town, borough, manor, &c. as it finds them; it molests none of the private proprietors of that which ought not to be private; and what does it ask of them in return? Nothing, but that they will suffer the constitution to be indemnified; and the influence of the people to re-enter the representation. To carry all this into execution would require but one short provision; namely, that the sheriff of each county be required, by himself and his deputies, to take the poll of the resident householders of his county in each parish on the same day; thus this great remedy to the constitution may be obtained in one day, with less tumult and expence than attends upon the election of a diminutive borough: thus the representative will be chosen, as he ought to be, by the people; and by shortening the duration of Parliaments, he will continue to act as if he were so chosen.

" MONTESQUIEU has said, that a free people will pay more taxes with greater alacrity, than a people that are not free; and he adds, the reason, because they have a compen-

compensation in the rights they enjoy. The people of England pay fifteen millions and an half annually to the revenue. This purchase they pay for the constitution. Shall they not have the benefit of it? Every individual pays fifty shillings a year. How many enjoyments must every inferior individual relinquish, and how much labor must he undergo, to enable him to make this contribution? No people ever deserved better of government than the people of this country at this moment: they have not only submitted with alacrity to this enormous mass of taxation; but when the health or rights of their sovereign were at stake, they gathered round the throne with unexampled zeal. Can such a people be denied their privileges? Can their privileges be a subject of indifference or remissness to this house? I cannot believe it; and therefore I move for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in Parliament."

The motion having been seconded by Mr. GRIGBY, Mr. WINDHAM observed, that, in his opinion, one preliminary question ought to be answered, previously to even the least reception of the motion. The right honorable gentleman had not proved enough to encourage them to go on with him in his proposition. He ought first to make out his grievance; then propose his remedy, and when the house were put in possession of both, it would be for them to judge how far the first was ascertained, and the second proportionate, and to decide, whether the remedy ought to be adopted or not. The right honorable gentleman had only said, that there was an inadequate representation, without producing any proof of the fact. The right honorable gentleman seemed to have mistaken the end for the means: experience had convinced them that they were not an inadequate representation, but that the house of commons, constituted as it was, was answerable

able to all the purposes that a house of commons ought to be, and that the people lived as happy and free under it, and enjoyed all the luxuries of life as fully as they could possibly desire. It was not usual to judge of the goodness of a tree otherwise than by its fruits; and to apply a homely adage to the British constitution, "The proof of the pudding was in the eating." The experience of ages had demonstrated, that the house was adequate to all which was necessary, and that with no better representation of the people in Parliament, they had been comfortable and easy, the country flourishing and prosperous, and the people safe. Every proposition of reformation or innovation was good or bad according to the nature of the case: this was a case in which we might lose every thing and could gain nothing. This project came before the house under the appearance of liberty, as all innovations did, which were likely to destroy that very liberty they professed to preserve. The liberty of their country needeth no speculative security: it could not be better secured than it was. But the right honorable gentleman had quoted the case of the Middlesex election, and laid great stress on the minority's governing the majority in that case. Why! be it so! If it had been the general rule of election, for ought he knew that house might have gone on well; and if it did, ought he to quarrel with it, because he was not able to see exactly how it happened, or how it had confused the people? If he were asked the reason, why it went on so well, he should answer only, 'there are more things in nature than are to be found in your philosophy.' As to the American war, the right honorable gentleman came somewhat near where he wished to bring him, to matter of fact.

Mr. Windham denied that the continuance of the American war had been owing to the inadequacy of representation;

tation; on the contrary, it was the wish of the people that it should be begun; a better proof of which need not be desired, than what had happened to the member for Britsol, a right honorable friend of his [Mr. BURKE]. Where did his right honorable friend sit for before the war, and where after it? He had been turned out for opposing its continuance. Towards the close of that war, a clamor was raised, and the cry was a reform of representation in Parliament, as a remedy for the expence to which the people had put themselves; when, he was afraid, they had undertaken the war, with no better reason than the hope of saving themselves by taxing America. A deluge of opinions were then let loose. All those wild notions were generated during the war; but happily they had long subsided, as he had hoped, never to rise again; but unfortunately, to borrow a phrase from the last debate, he feared the cry then set up "was not dead, but only sleepeth." He was sorry that a brood of these wild impracticable opinions had spread abroad from the continental affairs which, like locusts that lay torpid till awakened into life, would buzz about, fill the air, and fly away. He apprehended if they were suffered to remain here, they would destroy the verdure and beauty of the constitution. If he had approved ever so much the right honorable gentleman's proposition for a parliamentary reform, he should have objected to it, on account of the time, at which the right honorable gentleman had thought proper to introduce it. What, would the right honorable gentleman advise them to repair their house in the hurricane season? The right honorable gentleman seemed desirous of opening the door for a change, though he was so candid in his mode of proposing it, that he had professed himself perfectly indifferent what the change should be, and seemed only desirous that there might be some change: a change might be

be good in the abstract, but he would never consent to open a door to change, and to pull down and take the chance of building again. It was not playing upon velvet, as it was called in the language of play, when one party was sure of his game: much might be lost, but nothing could be gained. He reprobated the wild theories which were now so frequently broached, as if they were to give up practice and experience, and resort to theoretical projectors. It seemed as if a system of metaphysics was about to be introduced, and the ideal world were to govern the real.

Let it be recollected, that speculatists and visionaries were now *frontibus adversis pugnantia;* and therefore we ought to abstain from catching the infection. There was no grievance in this country, which we could not correct without resorting to ask the advice of a theorist. While the people enjoyed every possible degree of freedom and felicity, they were to be persuaded that they were miserable and slaves. It reminded him of a story in the Spectator, of a man in good health, getting into an habit of reading medical books till his fancy was taken such possession of, that he imagined that he had every symptom of that terrible disorder, the gout, except pain. He intreated the house, therefore, to resist these trifling reparations, as they were called: once adopted, like the puncture on a man's arm, they might lead to dangerous disorders of the body, and of the body politic as well as the body human. The constitution, now healthy and flourishing, might be alarmingly attacked, and thence fall to cureless ruin.

Mr. PITT coincided with Mr. WINDHAM in most of his arguments, and declared, "that were the motion before them the precise proposition he himself had formerly offered, he should now vote against it, from a conviction of its actual impropriety."

Mr Fox saw no reason why we should be struck with a panic on account of the situation of affairs in France; and in allusion to Mr. WINDHAM's metaphorical argument, he affirmed, "that no season could be more proper to begin a repair, than when a hurricane was near, and ready to burst forth."

After some farther debate, Mr. FLOOD consented to withdraw his proposition.

In the beginning of the year 1793 several petitions were presented to the house of commons, pointing out abuses or defects in the parliamentary system of representation, and praying for some effectual mode of reform. But the most masterly of those petitions came from an association which had been lately instituted under the title of "the Friends of the People," and was presented by Mr. GREY. It stated with great propriety and distinctness, the defects which at present exist in the representation of the people in Parliament. It took notice of the division of the representation, or the proportions in which the different counties contribute to the total number of the representatives, shewing, under that head, the absurd disproportion which takes place in a variety of instances, in so much that the county of Cornwall alone sends more members to Parliament, than the counties of York, Rutland, and Middlesex, put together, &c. It proceeded to take notice of the distribution of the elective franchise, or the proportional number, by which the different representatives are elected; stating under that head, that a majority of the whole house of commons is elected by less than 15,000 persons, or in other words, by the two hundreth part of the people to be represented, supposing that they consist only of three millions of adults, &c. It went on to take notice of the right of voting, or the various

rious restrictions and limitations, under which the privilege of a vote for the choice of a representative is bestowed, stating the great evils and inequalities that prevail in that respect. It afterwards took notice of the qualifications to be possessed by candidates, and those elected; and then considered the evils arising from the length of the duration of Parliaments. It went on then to detail the model in which elections are conducted and decided; and under that head, shewing the evils arising from the length of time, to which polls are protracted; from the influence of corporations by the powers entrusted to returning officers; and from the appeal to the house of commons under the operations of the acts 10th, 11th, 25th, and 28th of GEORGE III., as far as the same relate to the expence and delay. The petition proceeded to take notice of the mischief resulting from the defects and abuses which it had previously pointed out, particularly by the system of private patronage, and the influence possessed by peers and wealthy commoners in the nomination of what are called the representatives of the people, shewing, under this head, that, by the patronage and influence of seventy-one Peers and ninety-one Commoners, the return of no fewer than three hundred and six members of that house was procured, which considerably exceeded a majority of the house. The petition dwelt at considerable length upon all the points already mentioned, and detailed a variety of other abuses, all which the petitioners offered to substantiate by proof, and it concluded by stating the great necessity there was for the application of an immediate remedy, and the high importance of such a measure; and prayed the house to take the matter into their serious consideration, and to apply such remedy and redress to the evils complained of as should appear proper.

 After

After the petition had been read,

Mr. BURKE expressed his wish to know from whence the petition came which had just been read, as the place of residence of the petitioners was not mentioned. The names of the petitioners was then read by the clerk; after which

Mr. GREY rose and said,

"It was certainly not uncommon that petitions should be presented to that house from persons not describing their place of abode, or assuming any other description than that of the persons whose names were subscribed to the petition: if however it would afford any satisfaction to the Right Honorable Gentleman [Mr. BURKE] he had no objection whatever to state, that all the subscribers reside, either in London, or near it, and that the petition had been drawn up and signed there. On the very important subject which it respected, he was apt to believe, that whatever opinions gentlemen might entertain, either with respect to a reform in the representation of the people, or as to the time which might be thought proper for bringing it about, it must be considered by all parties as a matter of much importance to have laid before them such an accurate, full, and precise detail of all the facts connected with the subject, by those who are ready and able to prove the facts which they have asserted in their petition: it would also have the effect to shorten very much what he would have to say, and to render it unnecessary for him to trouble the house at any great length. He was aware of the difficulties he had to encounter: in bringing forward this business he was aware how ungracious it would be for that house to shew, that they are not the real representatives of the people: he was aware that the question had been formerly agitated on different occasions by great and able characters who have deserted the cause from despair of success; and he was aware that he must neces-

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sarily go into what may perhaps be supposed trite and worn out arguments. From recent circumstances, which had occurred since he last brought the subject before the house, he had an additional claim to candor from the extent to which the prejudices against all reform and innovation had been thereby encreased. It was by no means his intention to go into any of the transactions of the period when he made his original motion on the subject, or to carry any idea along with him of what might possibly lead to personal resentment. He came forward on the present occasion, actuated solely by a sense of duty, to make a serious and important motion, which he was ready fairly to admit involved no less a consideration than a fundamental change in the government. He felt in the strongest manner how very formidable an adversary he had to encounter in the Right Honorable Gentleman opposite to him [Mr. PITT]—formidable from his talents; formidable from the influence of his situation; but still more formidable from having been once friendly to the cause of reform, and becoming its determined opponent, drawing off others from its standard. With that Right Honorable Gentleman he would never condescend to bargain, nor should he endeavour to conciliate his favor by any mode of compliment: he had never disguised the objections he had to the way in which he had come into power, and to the whole system of his government since. In the course of the last discussion on the present subject, the Right Honorable Gentleman seemed to knit something of general objections to reform; but he well knew that the chief difficulty to be encountered would be the argument as to the danger of the times. This indeed is a never-failing argument, equally in times of prosperity and adversity, in times of war and of peace. If our situation happens to be prosperous, it is then asked, whether we can be

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more than happy, or more than free? In the season of adversity, on the other hand, all reform or innovation is deprecated from the pretended risk of encreasing the evil and pressure of our situation. From all this it would appear that the time for reform never yet had come, and never would come. By arguments such as these had reform been hitherto combated; and by the like he believed it ever would be attacked, until some dreadful convulsion should take place, which might threaten even the constitution itself with annihilation. Many had been the unsuccessful attempts to bring about a reform. At different times the great question of reform has been brought forward, but a proper time has never yet been found for it. In 1733, a motion was made in that house by Mr. BROMLEY for a repeal of the septennial act, and that motion was seconded in a very able speech by Sir WILLIAM WYNDHAM. At that time the proposition was met, and successfully resisted, upon the pretence of danger arising from Papists and Jacobites plotting against the state and the constitution. In 1745, another attempt was made; and that was the only occasion on which the pretence of danger was not made use of, although the country was then in a state of war, and disturbance; but the success of the attempt was just the same as of the former one. Again, he said, the business came to be agitated in the year 1758: then also the motion was rejected. The Right Honorable Gentleman [Mr. PITT] had himself brought forward the subject three different times in 1782, in 1783, and lastly in 1785, when he was minister. The same objection with respect to the time was then made, and combated by the Right Honorable Gentleman strongly and powerfully in argument, but without effect; and he had no doubt it would continue to be made successfully till the people resolve for themselves that there shall be a proper time. But while we

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are for ever met by this argument against any enlargement of popular rights, the encroachments of prerogative are overlooked, and no danger is apprehended from the passing an alien bill, a traiterous correspondence bill, &c. It was, no doubt, true, that in troublesome times it might be necessary to delegate a larger portion of power to the executive government; but why should innovations in favor of prerogative be watched with less jealousy than innovations in favor of the popular part of the constitution? The business of reform appeared to have slept from 1785 to 1790, when it was again brought forward by Mr. FLOOD; at that time, the internal convulsion in France had but just begun; and it was then asked, whether we would think of repairing our house in the hurricane season. But he would, no doubt, be told that the danger is now greater than ever this country experienced by many degrees; for the dangers, talked of at other times, are held to be all of no account, when compared with the danger of what are called French principles: if, however, there was ever any danger to this country from the propagation of French principles, or from this encreasing dominion of France, that danger is unquestionably completely at an end; for it was impossible that any set of men, who had not actually lost their senses, should ever propose the French revolution as a model for imitation: no argument, therefore, drawn from the situation of France, could apply to the kind of reform, which it was the wish of those with whom he acted to introduce.

"It had been said last year by the Right Honorable Gentleman, that this country had just recovered from the calamities of the American war, and that it would be imprudent to risk by innovation the growing prosperity of the country. Now the case was unhappily most woefully reversed; besides being involved in a most ruinous war,

the whole commercial credit of the nation is shaken, and we have sunk from the zeni.h of our prosperity into the most necessitous and distressed situation; witness the bill with respect to commercial credit, which that house had just passed; witness the daily numerous bankruptcies. In this calamitous state with respect to credit at home and war abroad, nothing could tend so much in all probability to deliver the country from these dreadful evils, as to have a pure and uncorrupted house of commons emanating freely and fairly from the people. Had a reform in the representation of the people taken place upon the end of the war and conclusion of the peace in 1763, this country had in all likelihood escaped the American war:—If it had taken place last year, it would probably have saved us from our present distresses. He and his friends, he said, had published, last year, their opinions on this subject, and credit would some time or other be done them for it. At that time, this country was at peace: Europe was distracted: had the house of commons been a free and fair representation of the people, these advantages would most probably have been improved and secured. At present it is said that principles have been held, supported by arguments equally dangerous to the constitution and to order: but, how can these be so well met as by amending the errors of the constitution? With these views, he had given notice of the motion which he now brought forward. However unwilling he was to put this case upon the weight of authority; yet at a time when it has become customary to charge with bad views all those who talk of any species of alteration, he thought it right to state it had the support of very great and high authorities. It had been supported by Mr. LOCKE; by Mr. Justice BLACKSTONE; by the late Sir GEORGE SAVILLE; by the Earl of CHATHAM; and by the present

Master

Master of the Rolls; the present Lord Chief Baron; and the present Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. It had been supported by the Right Honorable Gentleman (Mr. PITT) himself; and by the Duke of RICHMOND; and by an authority still greater than these, viz. by a speech of his Majesty from the throne. On looking into the journals of the 24th of May 1784, he found a motion made, that the King's speech should be read, wherein his Majesty says, that he would be always desirous to concur with his Parliament, in supporting and maintaining, in its just balance, the rights of every branch of the legislature.

"If he did not think it requisite to follow the petition in the detail of facts, it was for no other cause than that they are so fully stated; and can be distinctly proved. What could be more palpably absurd in point of inequality, for instance, than that the county of Cornwall should send to Parliament almost as many members as the whole of Scotland? And that representatives should be sent from places where hardly a house remains? And the fact being indisputable, he would now come to consider the effect: if, according to the present system, worthy, able, and independent men were likely to be chosen as representatives of the people, he would not aim at a change; but if quite the reverse is the case, and if elections are in most cases procured by corruption, then a speedy and effectual remedy would become essentially necessary; he wished the question to be decided on sound and fair argument. He mentioned this chiefly, because general representation is commonly supposed to be founded on natural right: but he rested his argument not on natural right: but upon what is in itself the best system of government, and most conducive to the happiness of the subjects. When he spoke of the constitution of this country

country, he did not speak of it as of a system, which had been established at any one time. No—it had arisen out of various contingencies, and at different periods; and its goodness and excellence originated from the very cause, on account of which some persons have pretended to deny that we have any constitution at all. But if there was one principle more strongly inculcated than another, at the time of the revolution, it was this, that the election of the house of commons should be free. One of the resolutions carried at that important æra was, that King JAMES had violated the freedom of election, whence it would follow that the crown ought not in a degree to interfere in the election of those who were to represent the people; but that the latter should be left to send to Parliament the persons who were the objects of their free choice. Another principle asserted at the revolution was, that a man ought not to be governed by laws in the framing of which he had not a voice, either in person or by his representative; and that he ought not to be made to pay any tax, to which he should not have consented in the same way. Now, he asked, was it possible more completely to trample upon these two principles, than to make the house of commons consist of persons not chosen by the people? At the revolution also the necessity of short Parliaments was asserted; and every departure from these principles is in some shape a departure from the spirit and practice of the constitution: yet, when they are compared with the present state of the representation, how does the matter stand? Are the elections free? or are Parliaments free? With respect to shortening the duration of Parliament, it did not appear to him that it would be advantageous, without a total alteration of the present system. But if it be said, that we are now in possession of that constitution derived from our ancestors,

and settled at the revolution, he would ask whether there have been no alterations since the revolution?

"Has not the patronage of Peers encreased? Is not the patronage of India now vested in the Crown? Are all these innovations to be made in order to encrease the influence of the executive power, and is nothing to be done in favor of the popular part of the constitution to act as a counterpoise? But has there been no alteration, since the revolution, even in the form and constitution of the house of commons itself, which has gone to the encrease of influence? The introduction of forty-five members to represent in the British Parliament the people of Scotland had also strengthened the hands of the crown; an assertion which no one could dispute, who was at all acquainted with the manner in which the Scotch members were elected. The abuse of burgage tenures, in defiance of an act of King WILLIAM, gave the crown an influence in many boroughs in England. He read a passage from that Act, in which it was declared, that all splitting of tenure tenements, and messuages, and hereditaments, for the purpose of multiplying votes, should be deemed illegal and of no effect; and yet, though this statute, by extending to all kinds of towns, necessarily included burgage tenures, the latter had unaccountably been suffered to creep out of the statute, and were daily multiplied in defiance of it, for the purpose of multiplying votes and encreasing influence at elections. On this subject he quoted an opinion given judicially by lord THURLOW, when sitting as Chancellor in the house of Lords, in an appeal cause from Scotland, respecting the right of voting at elections in that part of the kingdom. That learned Lord, after having said, that the right of election in Scotland had been debased, and put on the level of an English burgage tenure; the house of commons, he said, had an unlimitted jurisdiction in the trial of all

all questions respecting the election of its members; but if the right of election could by law be decided in a court of law in England, as it was in Scotland, he was convinced an English court of law would not be satisfied with such a mode of election as this, that a Nobleman's steward should go down to a borough with ten or twelve pieces of parchment in his hand, containing each the qualification for a vote, and having assembled round a table as many of the tenants or servants of his lord, should distribute among them the parchments,—then propose a candidate,—and afterwards collect these parchments, and declare his lord's friend duly elected for the borough: And yet, such was the mode of electing those who represented the boroughs where the right of election arose from burgage tenures. Such elections, Lord THURLOW did not hesitate to call a mockery. Mr. GREY remarked, that, when Mr. PITT moved for an addition of 100 members to be added to the counties, he could not carry his motion; and yet he had contrived to procure the nomination of 40 members by indirect means; for he had added to the house of Peers 30 members, who either nominated directly, or by irresistible influence, that number of members of the house of commons, as appeared from the petitions then on the table, and which the petitioners were ready to prove.

Mr. GREY then read the resolutions which are entered in the journals at the commencement of every session in the following words:

Resolved, "That no Peer of this realm hath any right to give his vote in the election of any member to serve in Parliament.

Resolved "That it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges, of the commons of Great Britain for any Lord of Parliament, or any Lord Lieutenant of any

any county, to concern themselves in the elections of members to serve for the commons in Parliament."

If the present system be right, these resolutions, and the principles upon which they are founded, must be wrong; and it would be better to expunge them from the journals, than to allow them to remain there while the practice is so totally inconsistent with them. It may perhaps be said, however, that although the constitution may have been in some shape impaired since the revolution, it still remains so good, as to make a change hazardous. In speaking on this subject, the influence appeared to him so excessive, and the occasion so important, that if he should even go a little beyond the strict bounds of what it may be usual to advance in that house, he hoped it might be overlooked. Were the evils of the American war nothing? These were in his mind entirely owing to the unequal and corrupt representation in Parliament. It may be said, however, that the house of commons are really a just representation of the people, because, on great emergencies, they never fail to speak the sense of the people, as was the case in the American war, and in the Russian armament; but had the house of commons been a real representation of the people, they would have interfered sooner on these occasions, without the necessity of being called upon to do so. He feared much that that house was not a real representation of the people; that it was too much influenced by passion, prejudice, or interest.

This may for a time give to the executive government apparent strength; but no government can be either lasting or free, which is not founded on virtue, and on that independence of mind and conduct among the people, which creates energy, and leads to every thing that is noble

noble and generous, and that alone can conduce to the strength and safety of a state.

> "What constitutes a state?
> "Not high rais'd battlement or labored mound,
> "Thick wall, or moated gate;
> "Not cities proud with spires and turrets crown'd;
> "Not bays and broad-armed ports,
> "Where laughing at the storm proud navies ride;
> "Not starr'd and spangled courts
> "Where low-brow'd baseness wafts perfume to pride!
> "No; MEN! high-minded MEN,
> "With powers as far above dull brutes endued
> "In forest, brake, or den,
> "As beast excel cold rocks and brambles rude;
> "MEN who their *duties* know,
> "But know their *rights*, and knowing, dare maintain."

If the present practice deviates from the principle of the constitution, he had surely a good right to call upon the house to enquire into the subject, and to consider in what way it may be amended. Indeed it was evident, that many leading members of that house considered a great part of it in a state of dependence; else what could mean the frequent appeals to those who were emphatically called the independent members. An Honorable Gentleman [Mr. POWIS] had, in 1784, assembled round him a little senate of his own, composed of those independent country gentlemen, from which he had excluded the borough members, as probably not coming within the description of independent members of Parliament. Surely this might be considered as a tacit avowal, on the part of a great enemy to reform, of the absolute necessity of that very measure which he so strongly opposed. There were arguments for reform, which he need only to state, to pro-

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duce conviction: the county of Rutland sent as many members to Parliament as the freeholders of Yorkshire; and Cornwall as many as Rutland, Yorkshire, and Middlesex together; and as many, within one, as the whole kingdom of Scotland. These were facts within the knowledge of the house; and surely afforded sufficient ground for a parliamentary reform. Here were other grounds arising from bribery, corruption, and expence at elections, which were known to every member who had served on election committees, though they were not known to the house as a body. Sometimes, indeed, reports from committees stated acts of bribery and corruption, as in the cases of Cricklade, and Shoreham, and Stockbridge, whose case was still depending. The most certain and effectual remedy in those cases was to establish a more popular election, which was the most likely method to secure the purity of election, and the independence of members of that house.

Mr. GREY then said, that his intention was to make a motion for referring the petition to a committee; but he had it not in contemplation to propose any particular plan, as there occurred to him many reasons against it. In the case which had just occurred, with respect to commercial credit, the Right Honorable Gentleman [Mr. PITT] himself had proceeded in that precise way; he had stated the grievance or evil supposed to exist: the house on his motion had referred it to a committee to investigate into the matter, and to report to the house; and upon the report of that committee, a bill had been brought in, and had now passed that house, which he wished sincerely might have the effect to remedy the evil. If then it should be said to him, why would you alarm and disturb the minds of the people, when you have no particular plan of redress to propose? He would oppose to such question, the

the Right Honorable Gentleman's own mode of proceeding in the case he had mentioned; but he would say also, that it was indeed the proper and regular mode of proceeding. He did not approve of the Duke of RICHMOND's plan of reform, though he thought it better than the present system: any plan would be better, which would secure such people in the house, as would vote independently, and uninfluenced by corruption: he could certainly mention a plan which appeared to him much better; but he was not bound by the general mode of proceding in that house, to move any specific plan, and he would therefore adopt that mode, which had been usually followed, and which appeared to him the best, viz. after having stated the grievance, to move for a committee to take it into consideration, and report to the house such mode of remedy, as shall appear to them proper. He concluded with moving, that the petition should be referred to a committee.

The debate on this motion was protracted to the unusual length of two days, when the house divided on the question for referring the petition to a committee, 41, against it 282.

Mr. GREY, was not discouraged from bringing forward the subject again at different times, and in various forms, under parliamentary discussion. But he made his grand and ultimate effort on the 26th of May 1797, when he very candidly confessed, that he laid his account from past experience with exposing himself to many uncharitable imputations. If in their resistance to the destructive system of ministers, if in their endeavours to check them in their ruinous career, if in their efforts to control them in their profuse and extravagant waste of public money, he and his friends had incurred imputations of a wish to gratify personal interest and private ambition, and of a wan-

ton desire to thwart executive government, they could not in the present instance expect to escape similar or still more odious imputations. It was some consolation, however, that though their exertions were not well received in that house, the public might pass a different decision upon them; and to the public would the eventual decision belong. It might perhaps be called presumption in him to call the attention of the house to the conduct of an individual so insignificant as he was. They would do him the justice, however, to allow, that in his proposition for a reform in Parliament, he had never proceeded on any speculation of natural and imperceptible rights. The measures, which he had the honor to bring forward, were founded, not in speculative, but on practical grounds. Both the speculative and the practical defects of the present system had been so largely discussed, and so often repeated, that his labor on the present occasion was much abated, without injury to the cause. His views, he repeated, had proceeded on practical grounds, and not on grounds of right, because no man could claim any particular form of government upon a ground of right. Here, however, he begged not to be misunderstood, when he stated this proposition: he avowed that there was no man more warmly attached to, or who would more steadily support the natural and imprescriptible rights of mankind; these were liberty and security; and when liberty and security were not properly guaranteed by any particular system of government, either in consequence of original or accidental defects, the people who lived under it, had a right to demand, either that it should be changed, or amended. But on the other hand, the advocates for universal suffrage, before demanding that their plan should be adopted, were bound to shew, that it was for the good of the people, that it should be adopted. It would be

also recollected that he had never grounded his motion for reform upon the inequality of the present representation. Inequality of representation of itself he did not consider as a sufficient ground for reform. For instance, he never had argued, that there should be a reform in the representation of the people, because Cornwall sent as many representatives to Parliament as all the counties of Scotland together; and because there were some boroughs with a few houses and a handful of inhabitants returned as many members to the house of commons as the opulent and extensive county of York. Though this sounded strange in theory, yet if it was not shewn that in practice it was injurious to the rights of Englishmen, their defence was good, who contended that the nation under its present system of government had enjoyed much prosperity and a large portion of happiness, and who argued against the inexpediency of a change for the chance of endangering the existence of the system, and of giving birth to evils of a much more serious nature than those which were experienced under it. Having thus stated his general principles upon the subject, he proceeded to inquire what was the end and the use of the house of commons, and what was the present representation of the people. When he considered what it ought to be, the questions naturally occurred, whether it had acted for the interest of the people? Whether it had watched the conduct of ministers? Whether it had controled the executive government in its operations? and above all, whether in the exercise of its appropriate duty it had been a faithful guardian to the public purse? When he considered what it was, suggestions of a different nature occurred. Instead of attention, he was afraid there had been negligence; instead of inquiry, that there had been confidence; instead of control, there had been obedience; and instead of

economy

economy there had been profusion. But if it had thus failed in its duty, and if misfortunes numerous and dreadful had been the consequence of the failure, whatever difference of opinion there might be, respecting the time and mode of reform, he was convinced there could be little or no objection to the measure considered abstractedly. How then did they stand? It was now five years since he first made a motion for a reform in Parliament. At that time the country was described as being in a state of great prosperity, and the public were induced fondly to entertain the prospect of a prolongation of the term of peace. When he looked back however for thirty years; when he reflected on the wars in which it had been engaged; and when he reviewed the conduct of the different administrations during these wars. When in particular he considered the conduct of the American war, and the embarassments, into which the country was brought in consequence of the profuse expenditure which marked the administration of that period; when moreover he beheld a new æra arising in France which threatened a great and momentous change in the political system of Europe, from all these considerations he was induced to bring forward a measure, which, in his opinion, would tend to prevent those evils from again recurring which the nation had formerly had occasion to lament, and which might withstand the influence of new opinions. In a short time after we engaged in a war with France, our prosperity was still stated to be undiminished. One campaign was to decide the contest, and the triumphant march to Paris was for ever to check the insolence of the enemy. A noble Lord then argued for the prosperity of the country, from the comparative statement of our exports and imports, and concluded a most eloquent description of our increased resources with saying, "that we had a rise from humili-

ation more glorious than from its fall, and trusted we might feel no second fall." That argument he considered as deficient, because he did not advert to the causes which produced that state of adversity, from which we had just emerged; and he proposed at the time a measure, by which the nation might be guarded against a second humiliation. Whether the remedy would or would not have been effectual, he knew not; but this he knew, that the remedy was rejected, and the country was again reduced to a state of calamity, which made the effects of the American war, when compared with it, trifling, and our situation after it enviable. If, as the noble Lord contended, the prosperity of the country was matter of credit to the house of commons, and if it was an argument against any change in the constitution of that assembly, the disasters which it has lately suffered, and the state of adversity to which it is now reduced, was to the full as good an argument either against its wisdom or its virtue, and in favor of a change of constitution. In stating the evils arising from universal suffrage, the noble Lord instanced the government of France, under which that mode of election obtained, and the profuse expenditure consequent upon it. Here again Mr. GREY contended, that he had the advantage of the noble Lord in argument, for if extravagance and prodigality were fairly charged as objections to the constitution of the government of France, would not the same objection apply with equal force to the profuse expenditure of public money in this country, the guardianship of which immediately belongs to the house of commons? What, since that time, had been our situation? We had been reduced from a state of great and unparalleled prosperity to a state, if not of despondency, at least of imminent danger and deep distress. Under the pressure of great and accumulated calamities, how had the house of commons conducted itself? Had they shewn

either

either the vigilance of enquiry or independence of spirit? Had they investigated the origin of their misfortunes, or checked ministers in their mad and ruinous career? Nay, the very reverse. In a war, remarkable only for misfortune, and distinguished on our part solely by disgrace, they had suffered ministers to go on from failure to failure, adding misconduct to misfortune, and madness to folly, without either investigation or enquiry. When attacks were made on the liberties and even the lives of the subject, the house of commons did not interpose in behalf of freedom invaded, or innocence assaulted! When the shores of our sister kingdom were laid open and defenceless to the fleets of an invading enemy, no enquiry was instituted into the cause of such gross and criminal neglect. When, by the mandate of the privy council, the bank of England stopped payment, and a shock unequalled at any other time was given to public credit, the minister was absolved upon his own excuses from any kind of censure. Having stated the effects of the system, it was needless to enter upon the mode of election, but was it not notorious to every one, that men without holding any communion with the people, without either property or talents, merely by throwing themselves on the patronage of a great man, got seats in Parliament, not for the purpose of consulting the good of the commonwealth, and defending the rights of the people, but for the purpose of promoting their own interests, by betraying the trust reposed in them? As a remedy for these evils he proposed to alter the system from whence they flowed. Had he implicitly followed the dictates of his own private judgment, he should have adopted the mode of moving for a committee to enquire into the nature and extent of the evil, and to have found out a remedy suitable and proportionate to it. Though that appeared to him to be the better mode of proceeding, when

when he proposed it before at different times, there was always one objection offered to it, which, on the present occasion, he was desirous of obviating. It was objected, " would you loosen the confidence of the people in the present house of commons, by acknowledging the defects of its constitution, without proposing a remedy by shewing how it might be constituted better?" To obviate this objection, he should state the outline of the plan which he conceived might remedy the evil of which he complained. His object then was to obtain for the people a full, fair, and free representation in the house of commons. He wished to alter no part of the constitution. It was his desire, that it should remain as it had been established, composed of King, Lords, and Commons. He did not wish to alter any thing which could remain in its present state, consistently with the attainment of his object, which, as he before stated, was nothing more than a full, free, and fair representation of the people. He should propose, therefore, that the same number of members should serve in Parliament as at present. He should propose that the county representation should remain nearly on the same footing. There were a few alterations, however, which he thought should take place. Instead of ninety-two county members, which there are at present, he thought that in future, in order to put an end to the inequalities that now exist, there should be one hundred and thirteen. For instance, instead of two for the county of York, as there are at present, he thought there should be two for each riding; and so in other counties where the present representation is not proportionate to the extent of soil and population. The next alteration, which he submitted to the house, referred to the mode of return. In order to put an end to compromises, &c. he should propose, that each county or riding should

should be divided into grand divisions, each of which should return one representative. The only other alteration, which he had to propose in the county representation, related to the qualification of electors. The right of election, instead of being confined to freeholders, as it now is, he thought should be extended to copyholders and leaseholders, who are found to pay a certain annual rent a certain number of years. These are all the alterations which he had to propose in the county representation. The reform which he had to propose in the other branch of representation, was of a much more extensive nature. He should propose, that the remaining four hundred members should be returned by one description of persons, which were householders. He did not conceive that it would be difficult in the present, as it had been found easy in other instances, to ascertain the various proportions of population in the different counties. He did not propose, however, that these propositions should be accurately observed, but that they should be regulated by local circumstances; for instance, that great towns, such as the metropolis, should require a greater number of electors to return a representative, than in places where the population was more scattered, otherwise the populous towns would obtain a too great local ascendency. It was a part of his plan, that the country should be divided into different divisions, and that, if possible, one person should not be permitted to vote for more than one member of Parliament, this scheme necessarily involved a great number of subordinary details, into which it was impossible for him to enter. In order to prevent expence, the poll ought to be taken through the whole kingdom at one time. This was the general outline of the plan which he had to propose. To state, that it could obtain any thing like

exactness at once, or that it was not liable to great difficulties in the execution, would be presumptuous and foolish in the extreme. But he flattered himself it was not liable to any insuperable or fundamental objections. Upon this plan the land-owner would find his property suitably represented. A merchant would find support in the householders, and men of respectability and talents in the different professions would find a fair door open for getting into Parliament. The only persons, whom he could wish to exclude from that house, were men who were neither possesed of landed property, nor engaged in commercial enterprize, nor professors of any particular science; but men, who, without property, without industry, and without talents, obtained seats in the house of commons, by the influence of great men, for the purpose, as he had said before, not of consulting for the good of the people, but of promoting their own interests. If such as he had described were the situation of the electors, what would be the situation of the elected? They would hold their seats, not on the basis of universal suffrage, but of universal representation. The qualification would be so fixed, that no man, however mean, might not hope by honest industry and fair exertions to obtain a seat in the house of commons. And he begged to say, that a man arrived at the respectable situation of being father, and consequently master of a family, having given hostages as it were to society as an assurance of his interest in its welfare, was not unworthy of a share in the legislation of his country. In order to carry this plan into effect, he should move for leave to bring in a bill, which he should not propose to pass this session, but which should be brought in, lie over for discussion during the summer, and be decided upon in the course of the next session. There was still another topic upon which he had not touched;

namely

namely the duration of Parliament. If the reform in the representation was adopted, but not otherwise, it occurred to him, that the duration of Parliament should be limited to three years. Having thus stated the outline of the plan, there remained little more for him to trouble the house with. The objection had always been made to a motion for reform, when he brought it forward, viz. "that it was an improper time to agitate the question." So far from this appearing to him to be an objection on the present occasion, that the time is one of the greatest inducements he had for bringing it forward. If he had had any doubts on the point, they would have been removed by the change which had taken place in the sentiments of many persons of respectability, who formerly disapproved of the substance of the measure, and doubted much its propriety, and whose support he looked for on this evening. But there were considerations of much greater weight. In what situation were we placed? In prosperity we were told that there was no need for reform; and though the Right Honorable Gentleman [Mr. PITT] at one time contended for the necessity of reform, if we would shun the recurrence of the evils of the American war, he forgot his promise when he got into power. At present, we are in a state, which, God knows was far very far removed from prosperity. He would ask then, whether, in the present state of unexampled calamity, the country could go on in its present scale of expence, without a check being given to those who had the direction of public affairs? If the present house of commons had brought us near the end of our resources, what could prevent our ruin, but a change in the constitution of that house? When he looked abroad and surveyed the face of Europe, there was no object which to him appeared so desirable to an Englishman attached to the constitution of his country

try as a respectable and independent house of commons, speaking the sentiments, and consulting for the interest of the nation at large. In France a revolution has taken place; the principles at least in which it originated, whatever others might think of them, he should always defend. Stained it certainly had been with enormities, but ministers themselves had confessed, that order was restored, and that they had asked pardon both of God and man. For his own part he entertained a sanguine hope, that in the end it would tend to the diffusion of liberty and rational knowledge all over the world. With this revolution then, how ought the people of this country to be governed? The constitution ought to be restored to them; and when every abuse was reformed, the system would leave them nothing to regret. If you look to Ireland, you find the affairs in that country every day beoming more alarming. God grant, said he, that a convulsion may not happen; but it can only be prevented by measures of reform and conciliation. If such an event should unfortunately take place in that country, would it not, he asked, be wise to prevent all ground for discontent in this, by removing in time every just cause of complaint? How is it possible that the house could possess the confidence of the people, after having brought the country to suffer disgrace after disgrace; after being brought to the verge, if not into the gulph of bankruptcy, without witnessing one effort on the part of its representatives to wipe off the stains it has received, or to save it from approaching ruin? Was it believed, that their debates in that house were conducted with a view to the public good? He admitted, for the sake of argument, that the side of the house, with which he had the honor to act, were no more actuated than the other by motives of a pure disinterested nature; though, while he made the admission, his con-

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science acquitted him of the crime. Was it not in every one's mouth, that the object of the one party was to keep their places, and of the other to supplant them? And, if such an opinion was entertained, how is it compatible with respect? These were the motives which induced him to submit to the house the motion which he should have the honor to propose. There was one other point, which was personal to himself, and upon which he ought not perhaps at all to trouble the house. As long as he held a seat in that house, he should think himself bound to perform the duty he owed to his constituents; but he considered it as unnecessary any longer to expose himself to that obloquy, which he had sustained in acting the part which he found himself called upon to take in the discussions of that house. Seeing calamity succeed calamity, and that every effort of his had hitherto been ineffectual in stemming the tide of misfortune, he despaired of a continuance of his efforts being more successful. Though he should always be present therefore in future, to vote for or against any measures by which the interests of his constitutents might be affected, after this night, he should not think proper to trouble the house with any observations. He concluded with moving for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in the house of commons.

Mr. GREY was immediately followed by Mr. ERSKINE, who spoke thus:

"I rise to second the motion of my honorable friend; and though I might content myself with saying, that I do so, resting upon the reasons and principles which he has so ably detailed, and which have always been mine also: yet I cannot, at this awful and momentous crisis, with propriety pursue that course. The principles, upon which we maintain the cause of the people of England, and indeed

deed the universal liberties of mankind, have been so frequently and scandalously misrepresented, that I owe it to my country, and to myself, to state distinctly the motives of my conduct. I will do it with firmness, and with a most fixed determination to follow up by my actions all that I shall profess. I desire with my honorable friend, to remove from the consideration of this momentous question all vain speculations on theories of government. I recommend a reform in Parliament simply upon the footing of the practical advantages which it is obviously calculated to produce, and its consistency with the genuine principles and practice of the British constitution.

"There are three questions for consideration, arising out of the motion which has been made: First, whether the house of commons in its present frame and constitution fulfils the ends of its office in the British government, so as to render any change in it inexpedient? By the house of commons I desire not to be supposed to speak of this, or of those long past, or that yet may be elected, but of any possible house of commons in its present frame and constitution. Secondly, Whether, supposing a reform in Parliament to be necessary, the specific proposition submitted to the house appears to be salutary, practicable, and adapted to cure the evils complained of, so as to entitle it to the ultimate consideration of the house in the form of a bill to be brought before us? Thirdly, Whether, supposing a reform of Parliament to *be* expedient, and the proposition made by the motion to *be* worthy of consideration, the present moment is seasonable for entertaining it? This last point is, indeed, a matter of the highest importance. The present is no common period, and pregnant with no common events. We are in a crisis of unexampled difficulty and danger; and we stand answerable to God and man for that singleness of conduct

which

which can alone avert our ruin. I observe that this state of things is not only admitted, but loudly returned to me as a censure on the rashness of the proposition before the house: but I undertake to demonstrate, that, if you would avert the calamities which threaten to overwhelm you, you have not a moment to lose in adopting the motion which has been made. Indeed, I am convinced this is the last moment that may be ever given you for deliberation. If you do not come to a vote this very night, which sanctions at least the *principle of a reform in Parliament*, you will find that you have neglected an opportunity never to be recalled. You will find it come back to you in a shape which may disrobe you of the power of deliberation, when concession will have lost its charm, and authority its dignity, and when the voice of wisdom and deliberation can be no longer heard. This, however, is out of its place, I shall arrive at it in its order. For the present, I will pursue my course.

" I will offer what I have to say on each of these points in a very words. In examining whether the present constitution of the House fulfils its office in the government, it is necessary to reflect, what the office and character of the house of commons really is, in genuine theory, and in original practice. Its office is to balance the other branches of the government; to watch with jealousy over the executive power, which for the ends of good and active government ought to be strong and powerful; and to protect the popular privileges against the encroachments of aristocratic influence and authority. Unless the house of commons be sufficient to maintain this character in its full vigor and purity, the popular branch of the constitution is cut off to every practical effect. The genuine principle of the government is lost and the people have no more political existence than

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slaves who groan under the scourges of despotic power. That the house of commons once fulfilled this office, is certain. That all our liberties were secured and established by its constant exercise is acknowledged. We recollect with pride and triumph the glorious exertions of our fathers within these walls, when tyranny was, century after century, combated and defeated, and the liberties of England and the world established,—It may be asked, wherefore it is, that when the house of commons, in its present frame, has so balanced the crown and so reared up the British government from infancy to maturity, we are called upon to restore a house of commons to its original purity and vigor, elected as it is like all former ones in the happiest æras? It may be asked, why we stir upon such a subject, even in this crisis of dismay, when every moment teems with the most portentous events—when every succeeding day makes the evils of the former one appear like security and blessing—when perhaps we have not much longer to remain in a state of regular government? [a cry of "*order, order*" from the Treasury Bench] "Sir, I am not to be deterred by clamor from expressing the sentiments which press upon my understanding and my heart. Whatever the house may think of this language, I shall not be condemned for it by the people who gave it its authority. This is a moment when to conceal, or even to tamper with the truth, from the affectation of delicacy or prudence, is to betray the country. Why is it then, that in such a moment, the disgrace, and danger of which no man can give adequate utterance to, do I stand up to require you to alter the frame of the house of commons, thus admitted to have fulfilled for ages the purposes of its institution? The answer is plain and easy. The circumstances of our situation are no longer the same.

Whilst

Whilst the people of England were engaged in a struggle for their liberties against a powerful, and arbitrary executive, acting by prerogative, and not by influence, and corruption, it was enough that there was a house of commons. Whoever sent the members, they had, when assembled, a common interest with the whole body of the nation. Common danger united them against the crown, and they had nothing to buy off individuals from the performance of their duty to the whole. When the crown could not buy this House, it was driven to curb its privileges. This made the house as one man, and the representatives of ten, or of ten thousand had the same spirit and the same interests on all political objects.

"If a principle so obvious required proof or illustration, we have only to look back to the struggles of the house of commons during the reigns of the STUARTS. We there behold it in its genuine office and character, reflecting the image of the constituent body, partaking all its feelings, and contending with wisdom and firmness against every incroachment of the crown. But human establishments are not made for immortality: they must change with the insensible changes in human affairs, or must perish by violence. The revolution of 1688 was a glorious æra in the constitution of England: it established the true principle of all political constitutions in maintaining the immutable right of the people to correct its government; but, unfortunately, too little care was taken to guard against abuses in the government so corrected. The formidable prerogatives of the sovereign were, indeed, reduced within the bounds of a just executive authority, and limited by the strict letter of the laws. But the terror and jealousy of the people were quieted by this victory, and the mild and seducing dominion of influence

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stole upon us insensibly in its stead, bestowing a greater and more fatal authority than ever existed in the most arbitrary periods of the government. The gradual creation of a mighty revenue, rising up amidst the glory and prosperity of the empire, undermined in a few years that nicely-poized constitution which unjust power, though exerted for centuries, had only served to stengthen and confirm. The crown, instead of being balanced and curbed in this house, has, during the greatest part of this century, erected its standard within these walls, and thrown the privileges of the people into the scale of the prerogative to govern the nation at pleasure without any control at all. So far indeed is the house of commons from being a control upon the crown, that it is the great engine of its power. The crown, by appearing to act with the consent of the people through their representatives, though in fact by its own influence, is enabled to carry on a system which the most absolute prince in our history could not have fastened upon England for centuries past. Taking this proposition in the abstract, who shall now be found to question it? The most celebrated commentators upon our laws have been compelled to lament it publicly in their writings on the constitution; and Mr. Justice BLACKSTONE, with all his leanings to the crown, has fairly confessed that fuch a system could not have been intended by our patriot ancestors, who had struggled to curb the prerogative, but by an unaccountable want of foresight, had established a principle most dangerous in its stead. So said the illustrious Lord CHATHAM, the virtuous Sir G. SAVILLE, and the learned Lord CAMDEN. So lastly, said the right honorable gentleman himself, and he would not have said so in vain, had he honorably persevered in that glorious course which was the nurse of

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his fame, and the pledge and promise of his youth to his country, and to the universe. I do not bring this to the memory of the house for the purpose of personal insult or mortification, but to add the authority of his understanding to the other great ones I have cited. It may be said, however, that these great authorities were all reformers; and we know that the wisest men are sometimes seduced by their prejudices and opinions to push their observations beyond the mark. Let me look, therefore, for a witness without exception—a witness to whose competency the present ministers can take no exception, and who, as he abhorred reform, must be supposed to have disclosed unwillingly the disgraces of Parliament. Hear his opinion upon the office of Parliament, and the shameful departure from it in practic ; and, then let every man look into the glass of his own conscience, and let the house, if it can bear the picture, say, whether it be like us at this hour.

"Whatever alterations time and the necessary accommodation of business may have introduced, this character can never be sustained, unlefs the house of commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more natural and tolerable, that the house of commons should be infected with every epidemical phrenzy of the people, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of nature with their constituents, than that they should in all cases, be wholly untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people out of doors. By this want of sympathy they would cease to be a house of commons; for it is not the derivation of the power of that house from the people, which makes it in a distinct sense their representative; for the King is the representative of the

 people,

people, so are the Lords, and so are the Judges; for they all are trustees for the people, as well as the commons; because no power is given for the sole sake of the holder; and although government is certainly an institution of divine authority, yet its forms, and the persons who administer it, all originate from the people.

"A popular origin cannot, therefore, be the characteristical distinction of a popular representative, which belongs equally to all parts of government, and in all forms. THE VIRTUE, SPIRIT, AND ESSENCE OF A HOUSE OF COMMONS CONSIST IN ITS BEING THE EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE NATION. It was not instituted to be a control *upon* the people, as of late it has been taught, by a doctrine of the most pernicious tendency, but as a control *for* the people. Other institutions have been formed for the purpose of checking popular excesses; and they are I apprehend fully adequate to their object. If not, they ought to be made so. But the house of commons, as it was never intended for the support of peace and subordination, is miserably appointed for that service; having no stronger weapon than its mace, and no better officer than its serjeant at arms, which it can command of its own proper authority. A vigilant and jealous eye over executory and judicial magistracy; an anxious care of public money; an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaint;—these seem to be the true characteristics of an house of commons. BUT AN ADDRESSING HOUSE OF COMMONS, AND A PETITIONING NATION; A HOUSE OF COMMONS FULL OF CONFIDENCE, WHEN THE NATION IS PLUNGED IN DESPAIR; IN THE UTMOST HARMONY WITH MINISTERS, WHOM THE PEOPLE REGARD WITH THE UTMOST ABHORRENCE; WHO VOTE THANKS, WHEN THE PUBLIC OPINION CALLS UPON THEM FOR IMPEACHMENTS; WHO

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ARE EAGER TO GRANT, WHEN THE GENERAL VOICE DEMANDS RECKONING AND ACCOUNT; WHO IN ALL DISPUTES BETWEEN THE PEOPLE AND ADMINISTRATION, PRESUME AGAINST THE PEOPLE; WHO PUNISH THEIR DISORDERS, BUT REFUSE EVEN TO INQUIRE INTO THE PROVOCATIONS TO THEM.—THIS IS AN UNNATURAL, A MONSTROUS STATE OF THINGS IN THIS CONSTITUTION."

"Sir, this is, in plain English, the degraded disgraceful state of this assembly at this moment. There was a time, and it has undergone no improvement since, when the right honorable gentleman admitted this to be truth. He admitted during the American war, what he denies to maintain his own war. Does any man now doubt that the constitution of this house was the cause of war with America, of the dismemberment of the empire which followed it, and of all the portentous consequences which have since crowded in its train? It has been often said, that the American war was at first the war of the people. No doubt it was, as every act of government will be popular which does not proceed merely from the crown, but begins with the general sanction of the people's representatives. The crown secures all the men of influence, property, and consideration in Parliament; and they carry the people with them, until they are at last brought to their senses by calamity and impending ruin. My proposition therefore is, that, with the management of our mighty revenue in the hands of the crown, and taking into consideration the manner in which the members of the house are elected, the house of commons has totally lost its original office and character as a balance against the Crown.

"Sir, it is often, perhaps always, by the concurrence of accidents rather than by the operation of permanent

 causes,

causes, that the great events of the world are brought to pass. The seeds of reformation, which had been scattered in the ground by these great men, came up at first but slowly; but they were carefully gathered, and re-sown by the right honorable gentleman himself. In the fulness of time, they grew up into strength; and but for his own fatal efforts, would have then ripened into a glorious harvest. But that which a man soweth, that shall he reap.—It was in vain that the right honorable gentleman, at the head of a corrupt government, endeavoured to repress the doctrines which he had propagated himself. He sought in vain to extinguish the popularity of a reform in Parliament, without which he had himself solemnly and deliberately maintained within these walls, that the liberties of this nation were undone. Unfortunately, however, he made the attempt, aided by the very corruptions, to the baneful effects of which he had himſelf opposed the reform, which he now persecuted. It was from this unprincipled opposition, and not from any republican contagion, that the spirit of the reformers acquired new energy, and force. This was the source of all that bitterness, with which they accused and reviled the late house of commons. For this cause they despised, and for this cause they therefore libelled the late Parliament, because they saw it struggling to maintain its own corruptions under the auspices of the very minister who had solemnly declared them to be wholly incompatible with the very being of an upright administration. I do not overlook the danger of such a state of things. I feel as much as any man the inevitable ruin of every government, which is ſuffered to fall into contempt and disregard with the people. But knowing that no ſuch loss of authority ever happened from the beginning of the world, but when governments fell off from

from the ends of their institutions, I feel in common with my excellent and enlightened friend who has moved the proposition, that the only cure for the evils which alarm government for its safety is, to make it what it has been in the days of our fathers, when it preserved the freedom of the people, and was crowned with the people's love and veneration. Upon that sound principle Mr. Grey brought forward his former motion in the year 1793, which I then seconded, as I am now doing the motion of to night. We thought then, as we think still, that the only mode of giving a safe direction to a spirit turbulent in the demand of liberty, was to give to Englishmen the substantial blessings of their own government. We thought that the surest antidote against those visionary and dangerous theories which constantly spring up from the heat of revolutionary movements, was to hold out to the people the real advantages which the British constitution in its native simplicity and purity was calculated to bestow. To raise a standard, around which the lovers of English liberty might proudly rally, to which all wanderers from it might return, and which would secure allegiance not by terror, which always fails in the moment of peril, but by the enjoyment of solid and substantial happiness; by the return of mild laws, of personal security, and the enjoyment of the fruits of their own industry, which are now squeezed to the very husks by the grinding machinery of a crushing and overwhelming revenue. This proposition was, however, rejected (as the present to night will be) and not merely rejected, but rejected with insult, and contempt. The right honorable gentleman, not contented with apostatizing from the principles he once professed, resisted them in a spirit and language of the loftiest pride and arrogance, which have since received their just rebuke

in disgrace and humiliation. The cause of reform was to be, at all events, pulled down; and all who maintained it were to be stigmatized, persecuted, and oppressed. This is the clue to every measure of government from that time to the present. The reformers had mixed with their cause an enthusiasm for the liberties of France, and for that reason the liberties of France were to be crushed. But the insolence with which the mighty changes of the rising world were denounced within these walls, is an awful lesson to mankind. It has taught us, that there is an arm fighting against the oppressors of freedom, stronger than any arm of flesh; and that the great progressions of the world in spite of the confederacies of power, and the conspiracies of corruption, move on with a steady pace, and arrive in the end at a happy and glorious consummation. I have always thought alike concerning the French revolution, and I have not now to assume that tone in the moment of adversity in which France must now be spoken to by those, who, from their vain defiances, have invested her with her potentous strength. The object of ministers was, it seems, to maintain the subordination of the laws, to uphold public credit, and to maintain, as they stiled it, the regular system of things. What has been the consequence? In the pursuit of this new mode of supporting monarchical establishments, they have absolutely changed, and are hourly changing, into republican establishments, the whole face of the earth. In support of public credit, they have broke the Bank; and in pursuit of public order, and in maintenance of what they call the constitution, they are driving Ireland, as America was formerly driven, to seek for emancipation in the arms of France; and if the present system be pursued longer, I maintain that what Ireland is at this moment, England

will

will shortly be. All this portentous scene is chargeable on the last Parliament. No minister of the crown could have accomplished the ruin of the country, without a compliant and corruptly devoted infatuated house of commons. I maintain, that if upon the day that our former motion for a reform was rejected, which was about the beginning of the career of his majesty's ministers; I maintain, that if the most arbitrary and rapacious tyrant that ever afflicted mankind by his ambition, had invaded and conquered England, he could not, consistently with common policy or prudence, in the disposition of what he had subjugated and appropriated, have leant so heavily upon all the springs of national industry, or so dried up the resources of posterity for ages to come, as the last Parliament has done under the title of guardians of our prosperity. I maintain, that ZINGIS-KHAN, would in wisdom have refrained from raising two hundred millions sterling upon this conquered island in the space of four years; and I maintain that he could not be so besotted as to have stirred up the conquered to revolt against his authority by arbitrary laws, by public bankruptcy, and a total proscription of that character of freedom which had for ages belonged to a people; and I maintain, lastly, that I believe the country would have died to a man rather than have submitted to what they are now sinking under, amidst that stupefaction and prostration of strength and energy which the baseness of corruption never failed to produce in the declines of nations; from the beginning of the world. But the government which rests on no other basis, is not made for stability or duration. It interests no passion or affection and is connected by no permanent principle with the feelings or interests of mankind. It stands for a season upon the mass of national subjection, shaking from time

to time by irritated and indignant feelings, which terror may suppress, but never can subdue or extinguish, till the moment of explosion arrives which suddenly overwhelms it in ruin: for know, that, in some new form or other, the original rights of mankind will surely be re-assumed, and the monuments of tyranny and injustice be overthrown". [Here there was a loud cry from the Treasury-bench of "order"]—"Gentlemen seem to be dissatisfied at the language I have employed, and at the catastrophe I have pointed out; but they should recollect, that it is the progress of their own system I have described. I deprecate the events to which it leads, and labor, therefore, to warn them while yet it is time to shun the precipice to which they are so madly rushing. I can take no interest in a new order of things. All my enjoyments, and all my hopes, prospects, and ambitions, rest for their existence upon the present government. All the fruits of a life of almost unexampled labor, are involved in the fate of the country under its present system. The security of all I possess is connected with the stability of the constitution; and this is the best pledge of my sincerity. The disgraceful and living examples of many with whom I once ought not to have compared myself, have nearly destroyed all other trust.

"I come now to the second question, viz. Whether the plan proposed by my honorable friend is likely to produce the practical benefits we desire, and therefore entitled to the farther examination of the house. My honorable friend, with that manliness and candour which characterize him, explained distinctly the principle upon which his plan was to proceed. He did not lay himself out to catch a prevailing cry by the flattery of any favorite theory, but rested his measure wholly and abso-

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lutely on the practical advantages it was fitted to produce. I object, as he does, to universal suffrage, as tending to defeat the very object it wishes to promote. I object to it likewise, when claimed as a right. Mankind have a right to be well governed; but for that very reason it follows, that they can have no right to insist upon any particular mode which, in practice, may be found to be inconsistent with the very end proposed. The system of universal suffrage would throw into the hands of some individuals a dangerous preponderance. One man employing a great number of persons might, by influencing their conduct, unite in himself perhaps a thousand votes, and thus destroy the freedom of election. Yet, though I disapprove so unqualified a system as that of universal suffrage, I am desirous that a larger body of individuals should be admitted to a political interest in the state. The house of commons should emanate from the people. The plan of my honorable friend attains this object with the most perfect safety. The representation of land will continue; only it will be more widely diffused, and extend itself more equally. No good reason can now be assigned for excluding copyholders from the right of voting; their estates only differ from freeholds in the mode of conveyance, and the privileges of Lords are no longer what they were in fœdal times: they are not privileges of property, but merely connected with authenticity of title. Lease-holders of a certain value, and for a certain term, which amounts to property, are in the same situation. Taking in, too, the inhabitants, house-holders, paying scot and lot, through all their ranks and gradations, compleats the system of rational representation. How is a people better described? Are the balances of the state to be shaken by the representatives of all the lands, and the inhabitants

inhabitants of all the houses in England, connected as they are with a thousand intersecting interests, with the public credit and stability of the government? Will you say, that the masters of families, house-holders, every one of whom has some relation, some tie, some members of a little circle round his fire-side, to whom he is attached, have no stake in the public fate, and are unworthy to enjoy political rights? Such a body of constituents would remove to a considerable extent the disgraceful practices which elections now exhibit. Suffrages, it is notorious, are sometimes bartered for money, for a place, or a ribband, or for the most trifling and ridiculous considerations. To remedy these abuses—to remove all riot and debauchery—make the electors vote each in their particular parishes—they will then come with calmness to exercise the most important of political privileges, and consider maturely upon whom they are to devolve the guardianship of their civil rights. What is the vice and danger of the times in the opinion of those who rule at the present moment? Is it not a contempt of the authorities of government, and a disaffection to the Parliament of the kingdom? What better cure can be suggested by the wisdom of man for that evil, than to make the Parliament emanate from the people, to make it the creature of their own creation? If they are prone to arraign the conduct, and to despise the authority of those in whose election they have no share, they will view in a more favorable light the objects of their own choice. The constituent will then entertain confidence in the representative, and the representative will feel some more regard for the opinions and wishes of those by whom he has been sent. Who then is to raise up sedition against such a government? As we lately had a national conspiracy without conspirators, now we must, in such an event, have a rebellion without rebels. Such

a representation would secure universal and permanent tranquillity. It has all the advantages of universal suffrage, without any of its defects. It is, indeed, properly speaking, an universal right of suffrage, because all those who are not included in it, may, without a figure, be said to be virtually and in substance represented. All the people in their various degrees, not included personally in such a representation, are members of some house or another, they are therefore represented in the persons of their fathers, or their nearest kindred, and bound in every feeling, as well as every interest which grows out of social existence, to support an assembly proceeding from such an universal national will: whereas the personal inclusion of every individual might, as I have already adverted to, give an undue influence inconsistent with the true spirit of independent elections. There is this last advantage in the mode proposed; it is a practical system standing upon no other foundation but its aptitude to promote the practice and enjoyment of British government, whereas universal suffrage is argued to be an unalienable right. To be well governed, is a right unquestionably unalienable; but if that could be said of universal suffrage, then, as I have already observed, the right of mankind is narrowed to one system and form of government; and however pernicious it may be found in practice, it cannot possibly be changed, since no legitimate government can be built upon the usurpation or the restraint of human rights which are universal.

"In this way, honest but visionary men, confounding the unalienable right of every man to be well governed with a right unalienable to interfere in the administration of actual government, impose an actual tyranny upon the world in their zeal for universal freedom.

"The system proposed by my excellent, and enlightened friend, therefore, avoids this dangerous stumbling block,

block, and erects a practical government upon principles which have no tendency to disorganize society, nor to shake the establishments of the nation.

"The last point of all, and certainly the most momentous, now stands in its order, viz. Is the present a fit moment for making any alteration, however beneficial in the constitution of the government?—My opinion is, that it is singularly and critically seasonable; and that those who seize upon the time as a foundation for objection, would lay the same hold on prosperity, if it were proposed on the return of peace. To try this, let us suppose that our situation were reversed, that commerce was flourishing; that our public credit was beginning to reestablish itself; that the winter of our affairs had passed away, and the summer was beginning to reappear—would it not then be said to the proposers of Reform, What but mischief can be your object? No sooner are the springs of industry again put in motion—no sooner are the sources of commerce unlocked, and pouring forth the riches of the country in every direction—no sooner has returning confidence in a re-animated government given a new impulse to every exertion of skill, and new directions to labor and ingenious industry, than you agitate your question of reform to set men mad upon theories of government, instead of supporting it by the peaceable enjoyment of its practical blessings, checking the rising prosperity of peace, and plunging us back into all the dangers and difficulties from which we had almost miraculously emerged. In this way the friends of reform would again be clamored down, and stigmatized with new topics of reproach, enforced by all the new corruptions which peace would furnish, and in which the seeds of other wars would be again certainly deposited and ripened. Depend upon it the enemies of reform are unalterable enemies to it upon principle, and will find no

no time seasonable for its adoption. That which men are determined to oppose, from a corrupt interest in abuse, they will equally oppose at all times and upon all occasions, though dissimilar times and occasions, as they happen accidentally to shift, will be alternately made use of as pretences.

"But it is farther said, in objection to the times, that there is at this moment a dangerous disaffection prevalent in the minds of men to the government of this country, and that pestilent and destructive theories have poisoned public opinion against all monarchical constitution. There may, Sir, be many persons disaffected to government." [*Hear! Hear!* from the opposite side.] "I put the case which the gentlemen on the other side are so loud to give assent to; and, though the existence of dissaffection may be true concerning all government in all times, yet I deny it to be true in the degree which has in this house been so repeatedly asserted. But admitting, for the sake of argument, that the imputation of wide-spread disaffection is just, how is the evil to be remedied? If despair of obtaining any moderate reform has driven any considerable numbers to republicanism, to whom is the fault to be imputed? Will any man deny, that the foundation of this spirit, whatever may be its extent, was laid in the declarations of the right honorable gentleman himself, who affirmed that it was impossible an upright or useful administration could exist whilst the house was constituted as it is, and who has unanswerably illustrated the truth of his position by the evidence of his own? Did the right honorable gentleman imagine, that he could prescribe bounds beyond which this spirit should not pass? Did he imagine that he could plant the root, and prevent the shoots from springing up? Does the right honorable gentleman think, that he can extinguish in the minds of the people

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that distrust of the present system of government which he himself has taught them to entertain? Or does he think by coercion to make them tamely submit to those abuses which he himself was the foremost to expose? Does he think to guard the constitution from violence by persecuting those who would peaceably reform it? Does he think to silence the voice of complaint by a sullen refusal to remedy the grievance? This road may be pursued for a season, BUT THE END THEREOF IS DEATH. Instead of inflaming by persecution, let me advise you to conciliate by seasonable concession. The system of terror can neither remove nor silence a deep-rooted and well-founded discontent. Let me remind you of the opinion of Mr. BURKE upon this subject. Much as I now differ from that great man, much as I lament that he has mis-employed his extraordinary talents to render prevalent those errors which have entailed such frightful consequences, it is impossible not to admire that profound wisdom which formerly distinguished his efforts in the cause of humanity and justice. In the fatal contest with America, he most luminously marked out the great duties and interests of governments in moments of emergency, and has shewn them to be inseparable. 'If there be one criterion,' said Mr. BURKE, 'which more than all the rest distinguished a wise and prudent government from an administration weak and improvident, it is this: well to know when and in what manner to yield what it is impossible to keep. Early reformations are amicable compromises with a friend in power—Late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered enemy. Early reformations are made in cool blood—Late reformations are made in a state of inflammation. In such a state, the people see in government nothing respectable. They will look at the grievance, and they will look at nothing else. Like a furious populace provoked by

by the abuses of a house of ill fame, they no longer think of regulation—they go to work the shortest way—they abate the nuisance—they pull down the house.'—This is a sort of epitome of universal history; above all, of the history of the times we live in. From the proud rejection of these maxims of policy and prudence, the governments of Europe are one after another tumbling into ruin by sudden violence instead of being insensibly altered by peaceable reformation. To this cause the original independence of America is to be ascribed. In the beginning she sought only the reasonable privileges of a dependent community. It was the refusal that gave birth to her independence. We refused to look at her grievances whilst they were curable. The same procrastinating spirit prevailed at that period which prevails now, and the same delusion as to the effects of terror and coercion. Lord CHATHAM's warning voice was rejected. 'Give satisfaction to America,' said that great statesman—'Conciliate her affection—Do it to night—Do it before you sleep.' But we slept, and did it not; and America was separated from us for ever.

"Ireland in the same manner obtained a sudden and unsought for independence, and has been brought to her present state of alarming hostility to this country. We refused to see what stared us in the face in characters reddening into blood; 'but the light broke in upon us at last, not through well constructed windows; but through the yawning chasms of our ruin. We were taught wisdom through humiliation.'—I am afraid we have much more to learn in that useful but melancholy school. The identical system by which America was lost to Great Britain, ministers are now acting over again with regard to Ireland at this moment. They refuse to redress her grievances: they refuse to listen to her complaints: what America was, Ireland, perhaps even England itself, will

shortly

shortly be, if you obstinately refuse to adopt that system of conciliation which alone can bring back affection and obedience to any government that has lost it.

"I can have no interest, Sir, in painting my country in such dismal colors—I can have no desire to see the land I live in, and in which I inherit so many comforts and advantages, involved in confusion and blood. My only wish is to see a happy, powerful, disinterested union, which may save from destruction the constitution of our fathers. But whatever is to be done, must be done quickly. When you are the voluntary givers, you can command the limits of what you give, and fix the qualifications of the gift. But if discontent arises, and what is now petitioned for is brought forward as an imperious demand, you are disrobed of all choice and deliberation. Think of this awful conjuncture, whilst thinking is of any use. For my own part, I solemnly declare that I think there is no alternative between an immediate reform by which the nation may be made happy, and a revolution by which it will be involved in blood and ruin. I may be told, that bad men may avail themselves of a moderate reform to compass the utter overthrow of the constitution. But if there really be those whom no concession can satisfy, yet by the very attempt you will add to the number of those who will feel new attachment to the constitution, and new ardor in its defence. You will separate those who are sincerely attached to the genuine principles of the constitution, from those who may secretly wish to destroy it. You will unmask those whose views go beyond reform: you will deprive them of that pretence which gives effect to their animosity; and you will furnish the government with new strength to resist their machinations. Let ministers instantly forego that fatal system of coercion which forced America from her connexion into the arms of France

France, and which is, at this very moment, driving Ireland to seek the same protection. Let them relinquish the insane attempt to retain the affection of that country by the point of the bayonet, which is hourly tearing out of the hearts of Irishmen those feelings of kindness and love for England, upon which the permanence of the union between the two countries can alone be looked to. This fatal system of coercion and terror, which ministers seem resolved to persevere in, has made half Europe submit to the arms of France, and has given the air of romance or rather of enchantment to the career of her conquests. Now in Holland—now on the Rhine—almost at the same moment overturning the states of Italy, and overawing the empire at the gates of Vienna. Without meaning to under-rate the unexampled energies of a mighty nation repelling the atrocious combinations of despotism against her liberties, I may assert safely, that she principally owed her triumphs to the very abuses which provoked the strife. The nations with which she contended had no privileges to fight for, nor any governments worth preserving; they felt therefore no interest in their preservation. Whilst the powers of such governments remained, their subjects were drawn up in arms, and appeared to be armies; but when invasion had silenced the power which oppressed them, they became in a moment the subjects and the soldiers of their invaders. Take warning from so many examples—the principles of revolution are eternal and universal.

"Let me conclude with repeating again, that the condition of this country renders a reform most critically seasonable. The nation stands in the most perilous predicament. Government is forced to call upon the people for greater exertions than at former times, burdens which

appeared impracticable even in speculation, are now to be carried into practical effect. This must be done either by affection or coercion; and this is the moment for the choice. Give the people the blessings of the constitution, and they will join with ardor in its defence: raise within these walls a standard which was never before raised, around which the friends of the constitution may rally, and to which the people will be attracted by the feelings of confidence and attachment: it will give general satisfaction; it will unite all who are divided and create a general spirit to bear up against the calamities by which we are surrounded."

Mr. PITT made the following reply.

"Feeling, Sir, as I do, the danger with which the present proposition is attended, upon the grounds upon which it has been supported, and in the circumstances in which it has been brought forward, I am very desirous, as early as possible in the debate, to state the reasons, by which I am determined to give it my most decided opposition. The honorable gentleman who introduced the motion, began with disclaiming very distinctly, and as far as he went very satisfactorily, all those abstract principles of imprescriptible right, all those doctrines of the rights of man on which those without doors, who are most eager in their professions of attachment to the cause which he now supports, rest the propriety of their demand, and upon which alone they would be contented with any species of parliamentary reform. The honorable gentleman denies the truth of that principle which prescribes any particular form of government, as that which is essential to freedom, or that universal suffrage is necessary to civil liberty, or that it even must depend upon that light which the revolution of France has let in upon the world, and from

from which however he derives the hopes of so much advantage to the general happiness of mankind. But in disclaiming these views of the question, and in placing it upon the footing of the practical benefit it was calculated to produce, the honorable gentleman did not state all the considerations by which the conduct of a wise statesman was to be regulated, and the judgment of an upright senator to be guided. The question is not merely whether some alteration might or might not be attended with advantage; but it is the degree of advantage which that alteration is likely to effect in the shape in which it is introduced; the mischief which may be occasioned from not adopting the measure; and the chance, on the other hand, of producing by the alteration an effect upon those to whom you give way, very different from that which had induced you to hazard the experiment. These are the considerations which the subject ought to embrace, and the views upon which impartial men must decide. Before we adopt the conclusion of the honorable gentleman, we have a right, it is even imposed on us as a duty, to take into our view as a leading object what probability there is by encouraging the particular mode of attaining that union, or of effecting that separation of the friends of moderate reform, and the determined enemies to the constitution which they conceive it calculated to produce; we must consider the danger of introducing an evil of a much greater magnitude than that we are now desirous to repair; and how far it is prudent to give an opening for those principles which aim at nothing less than the total annihilation of the constitution. The learned gentleman, who seconded the motion, said, that those who formerly supported parliamentary reform had sown the seeds of that eagerness for parliamentary reform which was now displayed, and of the principles on which it was

now pressed: he thinks that those who have ever supported the cause of parliamentary reform upon grounds of practical advantage, must not oppose those who having nothing in common with them but the name of reform, make that the cover for objects widely different, and support that pretence which they assume upon principles diametrically opposite to those upon which the true friends to the cause of reform ever proceeded. Will the honorable gentleman who made, or the learned gentleman who seconded the motion, say, that those men who contend as an indispensable point for universal suffrage; that those who hold doctrines which go to the extinction of every branch of the constitution, because they think it convenient to avail themselves of the pretence of parliamentary reform, as the first step towards the attainment of their own views, and as facilitating their progress; that those who, though they condescended to take advantage of the co-operation of those who support the cause of reform in this house, yet have never applied to Parliament, and who would not even receive as a boon, what they contend for as a right; can it seriously be said, that such men as these have embarked in the cause or have proceeded on the principles of those, who, upon far different grounds, and for far different objects, have moved this important question? Will they say, that those men have adopted the principles, or followed the course of those who formerly have agitated the cause of reform, who have avowedly borrowed their political creed from the doctrines of the rights of man, from the writings of THOMAS PAINE, from the monstrous and detestable system of the French Jacobins and affiliated societies, from that proud, shallow, and presumptuous philosophy, which, pretending to communicate new lights to mankind, has carried theoretical absurdity higher than the wild imaginations of the

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most extravagant visionaries ever conceived, and carried practical evil to an extent which no age or history has equalled? Will it be said, that those men pursued only that practical advantage which a reform upon principles consonant to the British constitution was calculated to afford, who saw without emotion the detestable theories of the jacobins developed in the destructive ravage which marked their progress, and their practical effects in the bloody tragedies which were acted on the theatre of France, and who still adhered to their system of indefeasible right, when they saw such overwhelming proofs of its theoretical falsehood, and its baneful tendency? Will it be believed, that those men are actuated by principles consonant to the spirit of the British constitution, who, with the exception of the pretence of parliamentary reform, adopted all the forms of French political systems, who followed them through all their consequences, who looked upon the ravage which they spread through all laws, religion, and property, without shrinking from their practical effect, and who deemed the horrors with which it was attended, as the triumphs of their system? Can we believe, that men who remained unmoved by the dismal example which their principles had produced, whose pretensions rose and fell with the success or decline of jacobinism in every part of the world, were ever actuated by a similarity of motives and of objects, with those who prosecuted the cause of reform as a practical advantage, and maintained it upon constitutional views? The utmost point of difference, indeed, that ever subsisted between those who supported, and those who opposed the question of reform, previous to the French revolution, which forms a new æra in politics, and in the history of the world, was union and concert in comparison with the views of

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those who maintained that question upon grounds of expediency, and those who assert it as a matter of right.

"The question then was with those who contended for reform on grounds of expediency, whether the means proposed were calculated to infuse new vigor into the constitution? The object with thofe who affect a parliamentary reform upon French principles is the shortest way to compass its utter destruction. From the period when the new and alarming æra of the French revolution broke in upon the world, and the doctrines which it ushered into light laid hold of the minds of men, I found that the grounds upon which the question rested were essentially and fundamentally altered. Whatever may have been my former opinion, I am to be told that I am inconsistent, if I feel that it is expedient to forego the advantage which any alteration may be calculated to produce, rather than afford an inlet to principles with which no compromise can be made; rather than hazard the utter annihilation of a system under which this country has flourished in its prosperity, by which it has been supported in its adversity, and by the energy and vigor of which it has been enabled to recover from the difficulties and distresses with which it has to contend? In the warmth of argument upon this subject, the honorable and learned gentleman has conceived himself at liberty to assume a proposition which was not only unsupported by reasoning, but even contradicted by his own statements. The learned gentleman assumed, that it was necessary to adopt the moderate reform proposed, in order to separate those whom such a plan would satisfy from thofe who would be satisfied with none; but who, I contend, by means of this, would only labor to attain the complete object of their wishes in the utter annihilation of the constitution. Those men who

who treat Parliament as an usurpation, and Monarchy as an invasion of the rights of man, would not receive a reform which was not the recognition of their right, and which they would consider as vitiated if conveyed in any other shape. Though such men had availed themselves of the aid of those who supported parliamentary reform on other grounds, would they be contented with this species of reform as an ultimate object?

" But does the honorable, and learned gentleman mean to assume, that these who are the friends of moderate reform (and I know not how such a wish has been expressed at all) must remain confounded with those whom no reform will satisfy, unless some measure like the present is adopted? Where has such a wish for a moderate reform been expressed? If those who are even thought to entertain sentiments favorable to that cause, had cherished them in silence, if they have abstained from pressing them at a moment when they would have served only to promote the views of those who wished to annihilate, not to reform, is it to be apprehended that any ill effects will ensue, unless you adopt some expedient to distinguish the moderate reformer from the desparate foe? Yet this is the main argument of the learned gentleman which he has put in a thousand different shapes. I do not believe however that the temper of moderate reformers will lead them to make common cause with the irreconcileable enemies of the constitution. If there are really many, who may be ranked as moderate reformers, it is at least probable, that they feel the force of the danger which I have stated; that they think it wiser to check their wishes than to risk the inlet of jacobin principles, and the imprudence of affording to the enemies of the constitution, the means of accomplishing its destruction. Has there been however any decisive manifestation of their desires, or is there reason to believe

lieve, that disappointed in their wishes, they will be immediately driven beyond the bounds of duty to the constitution? If there is no security that those whose views have already pointed beyond reform, will be recalled to better sentiments,—if there are even certain grounds to believe that they will merely employ any reform that may be introduced, as a step towards realizing their own system, upon what pretence can the present measure be held out as calculated to reconcile those men to the constitution? From the conduct of gentlemen on the other side, it is obvious that they do not conceive any decisive manifestation of the wishes of the people for a moderate reform being now introduced, to have taken place? My reason for such an opinion is this: we have seen that the gentlemen in opposition have not been deficient in their efforts to procure every expression of the public concurrence in the objects for which they have contended. From their own account, these efforts have not been unsuccessful; but supposing that no efforts of theirs had been employed, and that to the spontaneous impulse of the people themselves are to be ascribed the petitions which have been voted in different quarters, to a degree, indeed, in their opinion, to decide the sense of the country to be in favor of an immediate peace, and the removal of ministers, it follows that those who have presented such petitions have not felt, or the exertions of opposition have not been been able to excite, any expression of that opinion they have so often urged, that no change of men, without a change of system, would lead to any permanent good.

"It does not appear then, that there is any call upon the house to adopt the measure, which so far from being necessary to satisfy men friendly to moderate reform, they have not in any shape expressed a wish to obtain. Before the practical expediency of this measure, then, comes to be discussed,

discussed, the practical necessity of such a measure must be established. In this proof, however, the honorable and learned gentlemen have failed. I need not therefore go into the state of the country to refute the statements of the honorable gentlemen. Indeed I must observe, that every thing urged upon this topic was nothing more than assertion. The calamities and difficulties under which the country labours, the war with France, and inroads upon the constitution, the profusion of public expenditure, were the topics upon which they insisted, and which they said would have been avoided if parliamentary reform had formerly been adopted. I boldly contend, however, that in the origin of the war, in the efforts to an unparalleled extent which the novelty of the contest and the nature of the enemy forced us to exert; that in what they call inroads, and which we contend were necessary bulwarks for the defence of the constitution, the feelings of the people went uniformly along with the proceedings of Parliament. I will venture to assert, without the fear of contradiction, that in no time when the tide of prosperity began to turn in favor of this country, when the nation began to recover from the struggles, and from the burdens of the American war, when year after year the sources of public wealth and individual happiness were increasing and extending, had the functions of Parliament been more congenial to the feelings of the people, than in the painful yet necessary struggles to which we were obliged to submit in the present contest. That the nation suffered during the progress of the war many and serious calamities, I do not dispute; calamities however much less severe in their effects than those which have been undergone by countries acting upon a different system.

"It has indeed been urged, and with no ordinary degree of perseverance, that the voice of the nation is against the

proceedings of government: that, however, is more a matter of opinion than of fact; and every man will naturally judge of the credit that ought to attach to such an assertion, from the sentiments which are expressed in the circle of his own acquaintance, and from his personal inquiries on the subject. But I will undertake to say, that, at the present moment, amidst all the difficulties and embarrassments unavoidably created by the vigorous prosecution of hostilites, the system pursued by Parliament in support of the measures of government is the system of the people; and Parliament at no period possessed in a more ample degree the confidence of the country, than it does now." [Here Mr. Fox shewed some signs of dissent.] "The honorable gentleman may be disposed to controvert this opinion, but I am sure he cannot maintain the contrary with more sincerity or more perfect conviction, than I advance what I now assert. The right honorable gentleman, the house will recollect, was accustomed to assert last session of Parliament, with equal boldness and vehemence as now, that the sense of the country was against the system of ministers. Good God! Where can the honorable gentleman have lived? In what remote corner of the country can he have passed his time? What great public question can he state, upon which the public have not evinced a great degree of interest, as great as that shewn upon any former occasion? On the contrary, if ever there was a period which we should select, as the one in which the attention of the public was most turned to public affairs, it was precisely that period in which the learned gentleman has described the public to have lost all interest in the deliberations of Parliament.

"I know it is maintained, that Parliament does not represent the great body of the nation, and that the result of general elections gives no striking character or impressive

pressive feature of the sentiments of the people; but I desire it may also be recollected, whether there are not many leading instances and particular circumstances attendant on general elections, that go strongly to express the opinion entertained by the constituent body? And taking up the consideration in that point of view, I do insist, and am convinced the position cannot be objected to, that the approbation given by those who had been members of the last Parliament to the commencement and prosecution of the war were strong and powerful recommendations in their favor at the late general elections. I will for a moment, pursuing this argument, request the house to take the parliamentary representation as it had been stated, and recommended by the honorable gentleman [Mr. GREY]. I will desire the honorable gentleman himself to look for an instant to his own statement of the proposed additional representation of the counties, and then candidly decide whether he can argue that the sense of the people was not in a great degree to be collected at general elections? It is submitted in that statement to extend the number of county members from ninety-two to one hundred and thirteen: the augmentation therefore did not consist of many; and does the honorable gentleman intend to except the ninety-two members by a general proscription? or will he pretend to say, that the system of counies, as it stands at present in point of representation, goes for nothing? Certainly he cannot undertake to advance such an argument, and so evidently inconsistent with his own plan of reform. If, therefore, the one hundred and thirteen members, proposed by the honorable gentleman to represent the counties, would express the true sense of the people, it cannot be denied, on the same grounds, that the ninety-two who were elected by their constituents, were in a very considerable proportion the or-

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gans of the public opinion. The aguments, therefore, adduced by the honorable gentleman go against his own declaration, that the sense of the people was not the sense of Parliament; and that sense had been fully manifested in favor of the war at the general elections. Since, therefore, I recollect the former declaration of the honorable gentleman at the end of the last session of Parliament, that Parliament did not possess the confidence of the people, am I to be discouraged now after the general election from saying, that they actually did enjoy that confidence? But that is not the only statement which I can make in justification of this assertion. I will appeal to the proceedings in great and populous cities, as well as in the city of London, in which the opinions of gentlemen on the other side of the house, with respect to Parliament not possesing the confidence of the people, were as strongly refuted on a fair poll, by a vast majority of the electors, as by the elections for the counties to which he has referred. It consequently appears, that the honorable gentleman has not specific ground to proceed on; and that he has totally failed in the foundation of his assertion, that Parliament does not enjoy the public confidence. The learned gentleman has, in the fanciful flights of his eloquence, pushed his objects farther than his honorable friend; for he has not only said, that Parliament has lost the confidence of the people, but that the proceedings of Parliament have no effect whatever on the public mind.

"The learned gentleman, however, wished to unite two classes of persons very opposite in their pursuits. He desires to reconcile those, who by the very nature of their principles are altogether irreconcilable; those whose political doctrines are known to be inimical to legal government; and those who are distinguished by the moderation of their tenets. With respect to the moderates, it could not

not be too minutely attended to by the house, that they propose no plan of reform whatever; that they prefer no complaints; that they set out with no petition on that subject; and is it proper or reasonable that the house should spontaneously give what had not been even demanded? With regard to the other persons alluded to by the learned gentleman, the house, by agreeing to what has been urged in their favor, would give them not merely what they claim, but what they demand as an absolute right, and what is in reality the first step to the accomplishment of their real views. That the present moment should be a time for the measure of reform appears rather inconsisent, when it is admitted by the learned gentleman himself, that radical discontent is prevalent in the country; and when it is undeniable, that the men who talk of liberty aim merely at licentiousness, and set up the name of reform as a disguise to mask their revolutionary projects, and as the first step to their acknowledged system of innovation. Concessions to such men, at such a time, would be impolitic, would be fatal, would be absurd. The house also, by agreeing to the arguments of the learned gentleman, would grant what could not be of any use to one set of men, and what would be productive of great mischief to the other description. Such concessions, I will maintain, are not warranted by the sound maxims of philosophy, nor to be meafured by the numerous examples drawn from the history of the world.

"The honorable gentleman [Mr. Grey] has talked highly of the blessings which are to result to mankind from the establishment of French liberty; and because new lights have appeared to set off the doctrine of freedom, this house is therefore to alter their principles of government, and to accommodate themselves to the new order of things. The system of French liberty is represented as a new light diffusing

fusing itself over all the world, and spreading in every region happiness and improvement: Good God! is the house to be told, after the benefits which have been derived from the revolution in this country, that other and more essential benefits are to be added, by adopting the principles of the French revolution? From such lights, however, I hope, we shall ever protect this country, as against principles inconsistent with any government. If we are are to be relieved from any evils under which we at present labor, by means of this new light, I, for one, beg leave to enter my solemn protest against the idea. The doctrines upon which it is founded are, as I have already said, false, shallow, and presumptuous, more absurd than the most pestilent theories that were ever engendered by the disordered imagination of man; more hostile to the real interests of mankind, to national prosperity, to individual happiness, to intellectual and moral improvement, than any tyranny by which the human species was ever afflicted. And for this new luminary shall we abandon the polar star of the British constitution, by which we have been led to happiness and glory; by which the country has supported every danger which it has been called upon to encounter, and risen superior to every difficulty by which it has been assailed?

"But, independent of these general grounds on which I have opposed this motion, I have no difficulty in stating, that the particular measure appears liable to so many objections, that in no circumstances could I have given it my assent. Indeed I could as little concur in the plan of the honorable gentleman as in a proposal for universal suffrage: how near it approaches to that system, I shall not now discuss. The honorable gentleman on a former occasion has said, that he would rather have universal suffrage than no reform. The learned gentleman, how-

ever,

ever, disclaims universal suffrage, when asserted as a matter of right. Certainly indeed some people have reason to complain of the learned gentleman, who in supporting a plan of reform on grounds of practical advantage, refuses that universal suffrage to which he has no objection on practical grounds, merely because it is asked as a matter of right. He will however find it difficult to reconcile that practical expedience with the new light of general freedom, which has so unexpectedly broken in upon the world. The proposition, however, is neither more nor less than, with the exception of one fifth, to abolish the whole system of the representation of this country, as it has been formed by charter or by parliamentary arrangement, as it has been moulded by time and experience, as it has been blended with our manners and customs, without regard to the rights or compensations, or to the general effects of modifications. All these are to be swept away, and a numerical scale of representation to be substituted in its place; the country is to be divided into districts, and every householder, paying taxes, is to vote; thus a system would be introduced little short of universal suffrage. On what experience, on what practice is this gigantic scale of numerical representation to be introduced? In former plans, the variety of modes of representation was admitted to be proof, how much better time and circumstances may mould and regulate representation than any institutions founded on reasonings *a priori*, and how necessary it was to give way to the effects of such experience.—It is not the harsh uniformity of principles, each pushed to its extreme, but the general complexion arising out of the various shades, which forms the harmony of the representation, and the practical excellence of the constitution, capable of improving itself consistently with its fundamental principles. Who will say that

that this beautiful variety may not have contributed to the advantage of the whole? That system was practical, and experience has confirmed the excellence of it; but the present plan goes the whole length of destroying all the existing representation, with the exception only of the county members (why they alone are excepted I am at a loss to conceive) and bringing all to one system. Are the gentlemen, who propose this system, aware of the benefits resulting from a varied state of representation; and are they ready at once to resign them?

"It never was contended, that the inequality of the representation has been attended with any practical disadvantage, that the interest of Yorkshire was neglected because it sent only two members to Parliament, or that Birmingham and Manchester experienced any ill consequences from having no representatives. How does it appear that universal suffrage is better than if the right to vote be founded on numerical or even alphabetical arrangement? There is no practice, certainly no recognised practice for its basis. The experiment proposed is new, extensive, overturning all the ancient system, and substituting something in its stead, without any theoretical advantage, or any practical recommendation. In the mixt representation which now subsists, the scot and lot elections are those which have been chiefly objected to, and the honorable gentleman opposite to me formerly agreed with me in opinion, that burgage tenures and small corporations were less exceptionable than open burghs with small qualifications. Yet this extension of small qualifications, from which it has been a general complaint that much confusion, debauchery, and abuse at elections arose, forms the principal feature in the honorable gentleman's plan.

"Upon these grounds, therefore, looking seriously at the situation of the country, examining facts with attention,

tion, unless we would seal our own dishonor, unless we would belie the testimony of our constituents, we must dissent from the reasons on which the necessity of this proposition is founded. We ought to resist the specific plan which the honorable gentleman has offered, unless we would renounce the tried system of our representation for a plan at once highly exceptionable in theory, and totally unsupported by experience."

After several other gentlemen expressed their sentiments on the subject, Mr. Fox wound up the debate in the following manner:

"SIR,

"Much and often as this question has been discussed both within these walls, and without, and late as the hour is, I feel it my duty to make some observations, and to deliver my opinion on a measure of high importance at all times, but which at the present period is become infinitely more interesting than ever. I fear, however, that my conviction on this subject is not common to the house. I fear that we are not likely to be agreed as to the importance of the measure, nor as to the necessity; since, by the manner in which it has been discussed this night, I foresee that, so far from being unanimous on the proposition, we shall not be agreed as to the situation and circumstances of the country itself, much less as to the nature of the measures which, in my mind, that situation and those circumstances so imperiously demand. I cannot suppress my astonishment at the tone and manner of gentlemen this day. The arguments that have been used would lead the mind to believe, that we are in a state of peace and tranquillity; and that our circumstances are flourishing and glorious; that we enjoy the happiness of internal concord, order, and prosperity; which again

convey for our foreign relations, strength, security, and respect; and that we have no provocation to any steps to improve the benefits we enjoy, or to retrieve any misfortune that we have incurred. To persons who feel this to be our situation, every proposition tending to meliorate the condition of the country must be subject of jealousy and alarm; and if we really differ so widely in sentiment as to the state of the country, I see no probability of an agreement in any measure that is proposed. For myself, and according to my view of our circumstances, all that part of the argument against reform, which relates to the danger of innovation, is strongly misplaced by those who think with me, that, so far from procuring the mere chance of practical benefits by a reform, it is only by a reform that we can have a chance of rescuing ourselves from a state of extreme peril and distress. Such is my view of our situation. I think it so perilous, so imminent, that though I do not feel conscious of despair, an emotion which the heart ought not to admit, yet it comes nearer to that state of hazard, when the sentiment of despair, rather than of hope, may be supposed to take possession of the mind. I feel myself to be the member of a community in which the boldest man, without any imputation of cowardice, may dread that we are not merely approaching to a state of mere peril, but of absolute dissolution; and with this conviction, impressed indelibly on my heart, gentlemen will not believe, that I disregard all the general arguments that have been used against the motion on the score of innovation, from any disrespect to the honorable members who have urged them, or to the ingenuity with which they have been pressed, but because I am firmly persuaded that they are totally inapplicable to the circumstances under which we come to the discussion. With the ideas that I entertain, I cannot listen for

for a moment to suggestions that are applicable only to other situations and to other times; for unless we are resolved, in helpless pusillanimity, or in a stupid torpor, to succumb, and to wait with resignation the approach of our doom to lie down and die, we must take bold and decisive measures for our deliverance. We must not be deterred by meaner apprehensions. We must combine all our strength, fortify one another by the communion of our courage; and by a seasonable exertion of national wisdom, patriotism, and vigor, take measures for the chance of salvation, and encounter with unappalled hearts all the enemies foreign and internal, all the dangers and calamities of every kind, which press so heavily upon us. Such is my view of the present emergency of England; and under this impression, I cannot for a moment listen to the argument of danger arising from innovation, since our ruin is inevitable, if we pursue the course which has brought us to the brink of the precipice.

"But before I enter on the subject of the proposition that has been made to us, I must take notice of an insinuation, that has again and again been flung out by gentlemen on the other side of the house on party feelings, in which they affect to deplore the existence of a spirit injurious to the welfare of the public. I suspect, by the frequent repetition of this insinuation, that they are desirous of making it be believed, or that they understand themselves by the word party feelings, an unprincipled combination of men for the pursuit of office and its emoluments, the eagerness or zeal of which leads them to entertain and to act upon feelings of personal enmity, ill will, and opposition to his Majesty's ministers. If such be their interpretation of party feelings, or if the term be so understood by the house, I must say, that I am utterly unconscious of any such feelings, and I am sure I can

speak with confidence for my friends, that they are actuated by no motives of so debasing a nature. But if they understand by party feelings, that men of honor, who entertain similar opinions, conceive that those principles may be more beneficially and successfully pursued by the force of mutual support, harmony, and confidential connexion, then I adopt the interpretation, and have no scruple in saying, that it is for the advantage of the country; an advantage to the cause of truth and the constitution; an advantage to freedom and humanity; an advantage to whatever honorable object they may be engaged in, that men pursue it with the united force of party feelings, that is to say, pursue it with steadiness, zeal, and spirit, which the communion of just confidence is likely to inspire; and if the honorable gentlemen apply this description of party feelings to the pursuit in which we are engaged, I am equally ready to say, that the disastrous condition of the empire ought to animate and invigorate the union of all those who feel it to be their duty to check and arrest a career that threatens us with such inevitable ruin. For surely those who think that party is a good thing for ordinary occasions, must admit that it is peculiarly so on emergencies like the present; it is peculiarly incumbent on men, who feel the value of their united exertion, to combine all their strength to extricate the vessel when in danger of being stranded. But gentlemen seem to insinuate, that this union of action is directed more against persons than measures; and that allusions ought not to be made to the conduct of particular men. Is it not easy to analyse this sort of imputation, for it is not easy to disjoin the measure from its author nor to examine the origin and progress of any evil, without also enquiring into and scrutinising the motives and the conduct of the persons who gave it rise. How, for instance, is it possible for us to enter

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into the discussion of the particular question now before the house, without a certain mixture of personal allusion? We complain, that the representation of the people in Parliament is defective. How does this complaint originate? From the conduct in the majorities in Parliament. Does not this naturally lead us to enquire, whether there is not something fundamentally erroneous in election, or something incidentally vicious in the treatment of those majorities? We surely must be permitted to enquire, whether the fault and calamity, of which we complain, is inherent in the nature of the institution, in which nothing personal is to be ascribed to ministers, as it will operate in a more or less degree in all the circumstances in which we may find ourselves; or whether it is not an occasional abuse of the original institution, applicable only to these times, and these men, in which they are peculiarly guilty, but from which system representation itself ought to stand absolved.

"I put the question in this way, in order to shew that a certain degree of personality is inseparable from discuscussion, and that gentlemen cannot with justice ascribe to the bitterness of party feelings, what flows out of the principle of free enquiry. Indeed, this is a pregnant example of there being nothing peculiarly hostile to persons in this subject; it is not a thing now taken up for the first time, meditated and conceived in particular hostility to the right honorable gentleman. Be it remembered, that he himself has again and again introduced and patronized the same subject, and that on all occasions, on which he has brought it forward, it has invariably received my approbation and support. When he brought it forward first in the year 1782, that is, by the bye, in a time of war, and in a time of severe pressure of public calamity, I gave to the proposition of the right honorable gentleman my feeble support. Again, when he brought it forward

in the year 1783, at a time when I was in an office high in his Majesty's service, I gave it my support. Again in the year 1785, when the right honorable gentleman was himself in place, and renewed his proposition, it had my countenance and support. I have invariably declared myself a friend to parliamentary reform by whomsoever proposed; and though in all the discussions that have heretofore taken place, I have had occasion to express my doubt as to the efficacy of the particular mode, I have never hesitated to say, that the principle itself was beneficial; and that, though not called for with the urgency, which some folks, and among others the right honorable gentleman declared to exist, I constantly was of opinion that it ought not to be discouraged. Now, however, that all doubt upon the subject is removed by the pressure of our calamities, and that no spark of hope remains for the country, and the dreadful alternative seems to be, whether we shall sink into the most abject thraldom on the one side, or continue in the same course until we are driven into the horrors of anxiety on the other, I can have no hesitation in saying, that the plan of recurring to the principle of melioration which the constitution points out, is become a *desideratum* to the people of Great Britain. Between the alternatives of base and degraded slavery on the one side, or of tumultuous though probably short lived anarchy on the other, though no man would hesitate to make his choice, yet if there be a course obvious and practicable, which, without either violence or innovation, may lead us back to the vigor we have lost, to the energy that has been stifled, to the dependence that has been undermined, and yet preserve every thing in its place, a moment ought not to be lost in embracing the chance which this fortunate provision of the British system has made for British safety.

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"This is my opinion, and it is not an opinion merely founded on theory, but upon actual observation of what is passing in the world. I conceive, that if we are not resolved to shut our eyes to the instructive lessons of the times, we must be convinced of the propriety of seasonable concession. I see nothing in what is called the lamentable example of France to prove to me that timely acquiescence with the desires of the people is more dangerous than obstinate resistance to their demands; but the situations of Great Britain and France are so essentially different, there is so little in common between the character of England at this day and the character of France at the commencement of the revolution, that it is impossible to reason upon them from parity of circumstances, or of character. It is not necessary for me, I am sure, to enter into any analysis of the essential differences between the character of a people that had been kept for ages in the barbarism of servitude, and a people who have so long enjoyed the light of freedom. But we have no occasion to go to France for an example; another country nearer to our hearts, with which we are better acquainted, opens to us a book so legible and clear, that he must be blind indeed who is not able to draw from it warning and instruction: it holds forth a lesson which is intelligible to dulness itself—let us look to the kingdom of Ireland, and see how remarkably the arguments and reasoning of this day tally with the arguments and reasoning that unfortunately prevailed in the sister kingdom, and by which the King's ministers were fatally able to overpower the voice of reason and patriotism, and stifle all attention to the prayers and applications of the people. It is impossible for any coincidence to be more perfect. We are told that there are in England, as it is said that there were in Ireland, a small number of persons desirous of throw-

ing the country into confusion, and of alienating the affections of the people from the established government.

"Permit me, Mr. Speaker, in passing, to observe, that the right honorable the chancellor of the Exchequer did not represent my honorable friend [Mr. ERSKINE] quite correctly, when he stated that my learned friend admitted the existence of such men. On the contrary, the argument of my learned friend was hypothetical: he said, if it be true, as it is so industriously asserted, that such and such men do exist in the country, then surely in wisdom you ought to prevent their number from increasing by timely conciliation of the body of moderate men, who desire only a reform. In this opinion I perfectly acquiefce with my learned friend. I believe that the number of persons who are discontented with the government of the country, and who desire to overthrow it, is very few, very few indeed. But the right honorable gentleman says, that the friends of moderate reform are few, and that no advantage is to be gained by conceding to this very small body, what will not satisfy the violent, which, he contends, is more numerous; and he vehemently demands to know whom he is to divide, whom to separate, and what benefit he is to obtain from this surrender? To this I answer, that if there be two bodies, it is wisdom, it is policy to prevent the one from falling into the other, by granting to the moderate what is just and reasonable. If the argument of the right honorable gentleman be correct, the necessity for concession is more imperious; it is only by these means that you can check the spirit of proselytism, and prevent a conversion that by and by will be too formidable for you to resist. Mark this, and see how it applies to the precedent of Ireland. In the report that has been made by the Parliament of that kingdom on the present disorders, it is faid, that

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so long ago as the year 1791, there existed some men in that country, and some societies, who harboured the desire of separation from England, and who wished to set up a republican form of government. The report does not state, what was the precise number of those societies in 1791; it declares, however, that the number was small and insignificant. From small beginnings, however, they have increased to the alarming number of one hundred thousand men in the province of Ulster only. By what means have they so increased, and who have been the converts and proselytes who thus swelled their numbers to so gigantic a size? Obviously the men who had no such desire, no such feelings, no such design originally; obviously the persons who had no other object in view in all the petitions which they presented, and in all the applications which they made, than Catholic emancipation, and reform of Parliament. This is also admitted by the report. The spirit of reform spread over the country—they made humble, earnest, and repeated applications to the castle for redress; but there they found a fixed determination to resist every claim, and a rooted aversion to every thing that bore even the color of reform. They made their applications to all the eminent and considerable characters in the country, who had on former occasions distinguished themselves by exertions in the popular cause; and of these justly eminent men I desire to speak as I feel, with the utmost respect for their talents and virtues, and for the warm interest they take in the welfare of the country. But, unfortunately, they were so alarmed by the French revolution, and by the cry which had been so artfully set up by ministers of the danger of infection, that they could not listen to the complaint. What was the consequence? These bodies of men, who found it in vain to expect it from the government, at the Castle, or

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from the Parliament, and having no where else to recur to for redress, joined the societies whom the report accuses of cherishing the desire of separation from England; and they imbibed and became converts to all these notions of extravagant and frantic ambition, which the report lays to their charge, and which threatens consequences so dreadful and alarming that no man can contemplate them without horror and dismay.

"What, then, is the lesson to be derived from this example, but that the comparatively small societies of 1791 became strong and formidable, by the accession of the many who had nothing in common with them in the outset? I wish it were possible for us to draw the line more accurately between the small number that the report describes to have had mischievous objects originally in view, and the numerous bodies who were made converts by the neglect of their petition for constitutional rights. Is it improbable, that the original few were not more than ten or twenty thousand in number? What then do I learn from this? That the unwise, impolitic, and unjust refusal of government to attend to the applications of the moderate, made eighty or ninety thousand proselytes from moderation to violence. This is the lesson which the book of Ireland exhibits. Can you refuse your assent to the moral? Will any man argue, that if reform had been conceded to the eighty or ninety thousand moderate petitioners, you would have this day to deplore the union of one hundred thousand men, bent on objects so extensive, so alarming, so calamitous? I wish to warn you by this example. Every argument you have heard used to day was used at Dublin. In the short-sighted pride and obstinacy of the government, they turned a deaf ear to the supplicant; they have now perhaps in the open field to brave the assertor. Unwarned, untutored by example, are you still to go on with the same con-

contemptuous and stubborn pride? I by no means think that Great Britain is at this moment in the situation, or that it presents the aspect of Ireland. I by no means think, that the discontents of this country have risen to such a height as to make us fear for the general peace of the country; but I deprecate the course which was pursued in Ireland. What England is now, Ireland was in 1791. What was said of the few, they have now applied to the many; and as there are discontents in this country, which we can neither dissemble nor conceal, let us not, by an unwise and criminal disdain, irritate and fret them into violence and disorder. The discontents may happily subside; but a man must either be sanguine, indeed, in his temper, or dull in his intellect, if he would leave to the operation of chance, what he might more certainly obtain by the exercise of reason. Every thing that is dear and urgent to the minds of Englishmen, presses upon us: at the critical moment at which I now address you, a day, an hour ought not to elapse, without giving to ourselves the chance of this recovery. When government is daily presenting itself in the shape of weakness that borders on dissolution—unequal to all the functions of useful strength, and formidable only in pernicious corruption—weak in power, but strong only in influence; am I to be told, that such a state of things can go on with safety to any branch of the constitution? If men think, that, under the impression of such a system, we can go on without a material recurrence to first principles, they argue in direct opposition to all theory and all practice. These discontents cannot in their nature subside under detected weakness and exposed incapacity. In their progress and increase, as increase they must, who shall say that direction can be given to the torrent, or that having broken its bounds it can be kept from overwhelming the country?

country? Sir, it is not the part of statesmen, it is not the part of rational beings, to amuse ourselves with such fallacious dreams: we must not sit down, and lament over our hapless situation; we must not deliver ourselves up to an imbecile despondency, that would paralyse us at the approach of danger; but by a seasonable, alert, and vigorous measure of wisdom, meet it with what we think a sufficient and seasonable remedy.—We may be disappointed—we may fail in the application, for no man can be certain of his footing on ground that is unexplored; but we shall at least have a chance for success—we shall at least do what belongs to legislators, and to rational beings on the occasion; and I have confidence that our efforts would not be in vain. I say that we should give ourselves a chance, and I may add, the best chance for deliverance; since it would exhibit to the country a proof that we had conquered the first great difficulty that stood in the way of bettering our condition—we had conquered ourselves. We had given a general triumph to reason over prejudice; we had given a death-blow to those miserable distinctions of *Whig* and *Tory*, under which the warfare had been maintained between pride and privilege; and through the contention of our rival jealousies, the genuine rights of the many had been gradually undermined and frittered away. I say that this would be giving us the best chance, because, seeing every thing go on from bad to worse—seeing the progress of the most scandalous waste countenanced by the most criminal confidence, and that the effrontery of corruption no longer requires the mask of concealment—seeing liberty daily infringed, and the vital springs of the nation insufficient for the extravagance of a dissipated government, I must believe, that, unless the people are mad or stupid, they will suspect that there is something fundamentally false or vicious in our

system,

system, and which no reform would be equal to correct. Then to prevent all this, and to try if we can effect a reform, without touching the main pillars of our constitution—without changing its forms, or disturbing the harmony of its parts—without putting any thing out of its place, or affecting the securities which we justly hold to be so sacred, I say, that it is the only chance which we have for retrieving our misfortunes by the road of quiet and tranquillity, and by which national strength may be recovered without disturbing the property of a single individual. It has been said, that the house possesses the confidence of the country as much as ever. This in truth is as much as to say, that his Majesty's ministers possess the confidence of the country in the same degree as ever, since the majority of the house support and applaud the measures of government, and give their countenance to all the evils which we are doomed to endure. I was very much surprised to hear any proposition so unaccountable advanced by any person connected with ministers, particularly as the noble Lord had, but a sentence or two before, acknowledged that there had been, to be sure, a number of petitions presented to his Majesty, for the dismission of his ministers. The one assertion is utterly incompatible with the other, unless he means to assert, that the petitions, which have been presented to the throne, are of no importance. The noble Lord can hardly, I think, speak in this contemptuous manner of the petitions of Middlesex, London, Westminster, Surry, Hampshire, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and many other places, unless the noble Lord means to insinuate, that they are proofs only of our very great industry, and that they are not the genuine sense of the districts from which they come. If the noble Lord ascribes them to our industry, he gives us credit for much more merit of that kind than we are entitled


to.

to.—It certainly is not the peculiar characteristic of the present opposition, that they are very industrious in agitating the public mind. But grant to the noble Lord his position—be it to our industry, that all these petitions are to be ascribed. If industry could procure them, was it our moderation, our good will and forbearance, that has made us for fourteen years relax from this industry, and never bring forward these petitions until now? No, Sir, it is not to our industry that they are to be ascribed now, nor to our forbearance that they did not come before. He will not give us credit for this forbearance; and the consequence is, that he must own, upon his imputation of industry, that the present is the first time when we were sure of the people, and that these petitions are a proof that at length the confidence of the people in ministers is shaken. That it is so, it is in vain for the noble Lord, or for any other friends of those ministers to contend. They, who in former times were eager to shew their confidence by addresses, have now been as eager to express their disapprobation in petitions for their removal. How then can we say, that the confidence of the people is not shaken? Is confidence to be always against the people and never for it? It is a notable argument, that, because we do not find at the general election very material changes in the representation, the sentiments of the people continue the same in favor of the war, and in favor of his Majesty's ministers. The very ground of the present discussion gives the answer to this argument. Why do we agitate the question of parliamentary reform? Why, but because a general election does not afford to the people the means of expressing their voice; because this house is not a sufficient representative of the people? Gentlemen are fond of arguing in this circle. When we contend that ministers have not the confidence of the people, they tell us that

that Parliament is the faithful representative of the sense of the country. When we assert that the representation is defective, and shew from the petitions to the throne, that the house does not speak the voice of the people, they turn to the general election and say, at this period they had an opportunity of choosing faithful organs of their opinion; and because very little or no change has taken place in the representation, the sense of the people must be the same. Sir, it is in vain for gentlemen to shelter themselves in this mode of reasoning. We assert, that, under the present form and practice of elections, we cannot expect to see any remarkable change produced by a general election. We must argue from experience. Let us look back to the period of the American war. It will not be denied by the right honorable gentleman, that towards the end of that war, it became extremely unpopular, and that the King's ministers lost the confidence of the nation. In the year 1780, a dissolution took place, and then it was naturally imagined by superficial observers, who did not examine the real state of representation, that the people would have returned a Parliament that would have unequivocally spoken their sentiments on the occasion. What was the case? I am able to speak with considerable precision. At that time, I was much more than I am at present in the way of knowing personally the individuals returned, and of making an accurate estimate of the accession to the popular side, by that election I can take upon me to say, that the change was very small indeed; not more than three or four persons were added to the number of those who had from the beginning opposed the disastrous career of the ministers in that war. I remember, that, upon that occasion Lord NORTH made use of precisely the same argument as is now brought forward. What, said he, can you contend the war is unpopular,

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after the declaration in its favor that the people have made by their choice of representatives? The general election is the proof that the war continues to be the war of the people of England. Such was the argument of Lord NORTH, and yet it was notoriously otherwise; so notoriously otherwise, that the right honorable gentleman, the present chancellor of the Exchequer, made a just and striking use of it, to demonstrate the necessity of a parliamentary reform. He referred to this event, as to a demonstration of this doctrine. You see, said he, that so defective, so inadequate is the present practice, at least of the elective franchise, that no impression of national calamity, no conviction of ministerial error, no abhorrence of disastrous war, is sufficient to stand against that corrupt influence, which has mixed itself with election, and which drowns, and stifles the popular voice. Upon this statement, and upon this unanswerable argument, the right honorable gentleman acted in the year 1782. When he proposed a parliamentary reform, he did it expressly on the ground of the experience of 1780, and he made it an explicit declaration, that we had no other security, by which to guard ourselves against the return of the same evils. He repeated this warning in 1783, and in 1785. It was the leading principle of his conduct. Without a reform, said he, the nation cannot be safe: this war may be put an end to, but what will protect you against another? As certainly as the spirit which engendered the present war, actuates the secret councils of the crown, will you, under the influence of a defective representation, be involved again in new wars, and in similar calamities. This was his argument in 1782: this was his prophecy, and the right honorable gentleman was a true prophet. Precisely as he pronounced it, the event happened: another war took place; and I am sure it will not be considered as an aggravation

aggravation of its character, that it is at least equal in disaster to the war of which the right honorable gentleman complained. The defect of representation, he said, is the national disease; and unless you apply a remedy directly to that disease, you must inevitably take the consequences with which it is pregnant. With such an authority, can any man deny that I reason right? Did not the right honorable gentleman demonstrate his case? Good God! what a fate is that of the right honorable gentleman, and in what a state of whimsical contradiction does he stand? During the whole course of his administration, and particularly during the course of the present war, every prediction that he has made, every hope that he has held out, every prophecy that he has hazarded, has failed: he has disappointed the expectations he has raised; and every promise that he has given has proved to be a fallacy and a phantom. Yet, for these very declarations, and notwithstanding these failures, we have called him a wise minister. We have given him our confidence on account of his predictions, and have continued it upon their failure. Though no one event which he foretold has been verified, we have continued to behold him as the oracle of wisdom! But in the only instance in which he really predicted, as if by divine inspiration, what has come to pass, in that we have treated him with stubborn incredulity. In 1785, he pronounced the awful prophecy, without a parliamentary reform, the nation will be plunged into new wars; without a parliamentary reform, you cannot be safe against bad ministers, nor can even good ministers be of use to you. Such was his prediction! and it has come upon us. It would seem as if the whole life of the right honorable gentleman, from that period, had been destined by providence for the illustration of his warning. If I were disposed to consider him as a real enthusiast, and a bigot in divination, we might be apt to

 think

think that he had himself taken measures for the verification of his prophecy. He might now exclaim to us, with the proud fervor of success, you see the consequence of not listening to the oracle: I told you what would happen: it is true that your destruction is complete: I have plunged you into a new war: I have exhausted you as a people: I have brought you to the brink of ruin; but I told you beforehand what would happen: I told you, that, without a reform in the representation of the people, no minister, however wise, could save you; you denied me my means, and you must take the consequence. I say, Sir, that if I were to consider him as a bigot to his doctrine, or that his mind was tinctured with superstition, as we have heard of enthusiasts whose lives have been devoted to the fulfilment of their own predictions, the right honorable gentleman's administration has been shaped and his measures framed for bringing into a terrible demonstration the political doctrine with which he commenced his career.

"But a reform in the representation of the people, say gentlemen on the opposite side of the house, is not called for by the country; and though meetings have been held in various parts of the kingdom, and petitions have come up for the dismissal of ministers, they have not expressed a wish for reform. In answer to this argument, it is only necessary to observe, that the restrictions which have recently been laid on meetings of the people, and on popular discussion, may serve to account for the question of reform not being mixed with that which was the subject of their immediate consideration. The purpose of the meeting is necessarily specified in the requisition to the sheriff; and if any other business was attempted to be brought forward, the sheriff would have the power of dispersing the meeting. This has actually been experienced; for at a meeting of a very respectable county in Ireland, the county of

of Antrim, after the immediate business for which they were assembled was transacted, that of a petition for the dismissal of his Majesty's ministers, and of Catholic emancipation and reform, a motion was made for thanks to Earl MOIRA and myself, on account of the steps we had taken to turn the attention of government to the critical state of that kingdom—a pretty unequivocal proof, that the freeholders of that great and respectable county did not consider our proceedings as an interference with the independent legislature of the sister kingdom. But what was the conduct of the sheriff on this occasion? I do not at all complain of it as wrong, because I think that business ought always to be previously announced; but it seems to shew the power of the sheriff in such a case. The sheriff declared, that he could not put the question, though he had personally no objection to it, because it did not make a part of the business mentioned in the requisition. Now, Sir, this is only an example to prove, that however well disposed to parliamentary reform, the people could not with propriety introduce the matter into the petitions agreed upon by meetings called for a different purpose. Their silence upon the subject is no proof either way. The right honorable gentleman will not prophesy, that because petitions have not come up, petitions will not come. It was, perhaps, a prudent resolution to think of one subject only at a time. Perhaps they thought that the surest, if not the only way to accomplish a reform in the representation, was to procure the removal of those ministers who had abandoned the measure. But granting even the fact, that the country does not now call for this reform—a fact which, however, I deny, is the country in such a situation as to make it improbable that the universal demand of a parliamentary reform which has burst from the people of Ireland, will not

 speedily

speedily be communicated by sympathy to the people of England? When I see that the treatment, which the people of Ireland have received upon this subject, has exasperated their minds to such a degree as to throw the whole of that kingdom into confusion, and that we have daily to dread the danger of actual insurrection, shall I not take measures to prevent the rise of a passion that may swell into equal tumult? The nearness of the two countries, the sympathetic interest, the similarity of language, of constitution and almost of suffering, make it probable that the one nation will catch the disease of the other, unless we interpose a seasonable cure, or rather preventive of the malady. Is it not desirable, in a moment of such agitation, and on the eve of such a crisis as we are likely to encounter? It is wisdom, it is prudence, to erect a standard around which all the patriotism and the moderation of the kingdom may rally, and the government may be strengthened against the violence of the few, by the countenance and support of the many. If it be true, as we have been taught to believe by our ancestors, that that government is the strongest, whose basis is the broadest, it must be conceded to me, that a prudent extension of the representative system is a salutary mean of widening the foundations of the fabric of the British government. The right honorable gentleman speaks of the strength of government. What symptom of strength does it exhibit? Is it the cordiality of all the branches of the national force? Is it the harmony that happily reigns in all the departments of the executive power? Is it the reciprocal affection that subsists between the government and the people? Is it the energy with which the people are eager and alert to carry into execution the measures of the administration, from the heart-felt conviction, that they are founded in wisdom, favorable to their own free-

dom, and calculated for national happiness? Is it because our resources are flourishing and untouched, because our vigor is undiminished, because our spirit is animated by success, and our courage by our glory? Is it because government have in a perilous situation, when they have been obliged to call upon the country for sacrifices, shewn a conciliating tenderness and regard for the rights of the people, as well as a marked disinterestedness and forbearance on their own parts, by which they have, in an exemplary manner, made their own economy to keep pace with the encreased demands for the public service; and have they by these means secured to the government the confidence, the affection, the generosity, and the spirit of the people? Are these the sources of the strength of government? I forbear, Sir, to push the enquiry: I forbear to allude more particularly to symptoms which no man can contemplate at this moment without grief and dismay. It is not the declarations of right honorable gentlemen that constitute the strength of a government. You may deceive yourselves by lofty and vain language; but you yourselves will be the only dupes. That government alone is strong which has the hearts of the people; and will any man contend, that we should not be more likely to add strength to the state, if we were to extend the basis of the popular representation? Would not an house of commons freely elected, and that was in truth the representative of the people, in supporting the administration of the crown, be more likely to conciliate and to insure the support of the people? If this be true in the abstract, it is certainly our peculiar duty to look for this support in the hour of difficulty. What man, who foresees a hurricane, is not desirous of strengthening his house? If he conceives it to be incapable of standing the storm, he fortifies it by buttresses, and takes every precaution which

 prudence

prudence and foresight can suggest. Shall nations alone be blind to the dictates of reason, and sit supine on the approach of the tempest? Let us not, Sir, be deterred from this act of prudence by the false representations that are made to us, or the false deductions that are drawn from the recent occurrences of the world. I do not care for misrepresentation, and I do not scruple to give my opinion on those occurrences with freedom. France is the phantom that is constantly held out to terrify us from our purpose. Look at France. It will not be denied but that she stands on the broad basis of free representation. Whatever other views the government of France may exhibit, and which may afford just alarm to other nations, it cannot be denied that her representative system has proved itself capable of vigorous exertion. It cannot be denied, but that it has given her in truth gigantic strength. We feel it too sensibly—Europe feels it too sensibly for denial.

"Now, Sir, though I do not wish you to imitate France, and though I am persuaded you have no necessity for any terror of such imitation being forced upon you, yet I say that you ought to take example, of what is good in it. I say, that you ought to be as ready to adopt the virtues, as you are steady in averting from the country the vices of France. I say, Sir, that if it is demonstrated, beyond the power of subterfuge to question, that genuine representation alone can give solid power, and that in order to make government strong, the people must make the government; I say, that you ought to act on this grand maxim of political wisdom thus demonstrated, and call in the people, according to the original principles of your system, to the strength of your government. I say, that in doing this, you will not innovate, you will not imitate, you will only recur to the true path of the consti-

constitution of England. In making the people of England a constituent part of the government of England, you do no more than restore the genuine edifice designed and framed by our ancestors. An honorable baronet spoke of the instability of democracies, and says, that history does not give us the example of one that has lasted eighty years. Sir, I am not speaking of pure democracies, and therefore his allusion does not apply to my argument. Eighty years, however, of peace and repose would be pretty well for any people to enjoy, and would be no bad recommendation of a pure democracy. I am very ready, however, to agree with the honorable baronet, that, according to the experience of history, the ancient democracies of the world were vicious and objectionable on many accounts; their instability, their injustice, and many other vices cannot be overlooked; but surely, when we turn to the ancient democracies of Greece, when we see them in all the splendor of arts and of arms, when we see how they aroused and invigorated genius, and to what an elevation they carried the powers of man, it cannot be denied that however vicious on the score of ingratitude, of injustice, they were, at least, the pregnant and never-failing source of national strength; and that, in particular, they brought forth and afforded this strength in a peculiar manner in the moment of difficulty, and distress When we look at the democracies of the ancient world, we are compelled to acknowledge their oppressions to their dependencies, their horrible acts of injustice and of ingratitude to their own citizens; but they compel us also to admiration by their vigor, their constancy, their spirit, and their exertions in every great emergency in which they were called upon to act. We are compelled to own, that it gives a power of which no other form of government is capable. Why? Because it incorporates

every man with the state—because it arouses every thing that belongs to the soul, as well as to the body of man—because it makes every individual creature feel, that he is fighting for himself, and not for another; that it is his own cause, his own safety, his own concern, his own dignity, on the face of the earth, and his own interest on the identical soil which he has to maintain; and accordingly we find that whatever may be ascribed, that whatever may be objected to them on account of the turbulency of the passions which they engender, their short duration, and their disgusting vices, they have exacted from the common suffrage of mankind the palm of strength and vigor. Who that reads the history of the Persian war, what boy whose heart is warmed by the grand and sublime actions which the democratic spirit produced, does not find in this principle the key to all the wonders which were achieved at Thermopylæ and elsewhere, and of which the recent and marvellous acts of the French people are pregnant examples? He sees that the principle of liberty only could create the sublime and irrestible emotion; and it is in vain to deny, from the striking illustration that our own times have given, that the principle is eternal, and that it belongs to the heart of man. Shall we then refuse to take the benefit of this invigorating principle? Shall we refuse to take the benefit which the wisdom of our ancestors resolved that it should confer on the British constitution? With the knowledge that it can be reinfused into our system without violence, without disturbing any one of its parts, are we become so inert, so terrified, or so stupid, as to hesitate for one hour to restore ourselves to the health which it would be sure to give? When we see the giant power it confers upon others, we ought not to withhold it from Great Britain. How long is it since we were told in this house, that

France

France was a blank in the map of Europe, and that she lay an easy prey to any power that might be disposed to divide and plunder her? Yet we see that, by the mere force and spirit of this principle, France has brought all Europe to her feet. Without disguising the vices of France, without overlooking the horrors that have been committed, and that have tarnished the glory of the revolution, it cannot be denied, that they have exemplified the doctrine, that if you wish for power, you must look to liberty. If ever there was a moment when this maxim ought to be dear to us, it is the present. We have tried all other means: we have had recourse to every stratagem, that artifice, that influence, that cunning could suggest—we have addressed ourselves to all the base passions of the nation: we have addressed ourselves to pride, to avarice, to fear: we have awakened all the interested emotions: we have employed every thing that flattery, every thing that address, every thing that privilege could effect: we have tried to terrify them into exertion; and all has been unequal to our emergency. Let us try them by the only means which experience demonstrates to be invincible: let us address ourselves to their love: let us identify them with ourselves: let us make it their own cause, as well as ours. To induce them to come forward in support of the state, let us make them a part of the state, and this they become the very instant you give them a house of commons that is the faithful organ of their will: then, Sir, when you have made them believe and feel that there can be but one interest in the country, you will never call upon them in vain for exertion. Can this be the case, as the house of commons is now constituted? Can they think so, if they review the administration of the right honorable gentleman, every part of which must convince them, that the present representation is a mock-

ery and shadow? I shall not trouble you, Sir, with going over the whole of that series of disastrous measures, that have forced upon the country the impression that the house of commons has lost its efficacy in the system of government. But, let us look back to the very singular circumstances, under which the right honorable gentleman came into power: from this we shall see in what estimation the house of commous is held, even by government itself, when it does not suit their purpose to extol it as the representative of the people. The right honorable gentleman came into power against the sense of the majority of the house of commons, and armed with all the corrupt power of the crown, he stood, and successfully resisted the power of the house of commons. He declared, that it was not the representative of the people—that it did not speak the sense of the nation; and he derided its weakness, and inefficiency. What is the doctrine that this conduct in 1784 promulgated? That the house of commons, so long as it obeys the will of the minister, so long as it grants every thing that he demands, so long as it supports every measure which be brings forward, is the genuine representative of the country—so long it is powerful and omnipotent; but the moment that a house of commons presumes to be the censor of government, the moment that it assumes the character of diffidence and opposition, from that instant it ceases to have power or authority in the kingdom—it then becomes a straw which the minister can puff away with a breath: this he did, and completed his triumph. Since that time, who will say, that the corrupt influence of the crown has not made enormous strides in destroying the power of election? Since that time four fifths of the election franchises of Scotland and Cornwall particularly have passed into the hands of government; and the prediction, which an honorable gentleman

gentleman [Mr. BURKE] then made upon the occasion has been literally fulfilled. No house of commons has since been found strong enough to oppose the ministers of the crown. It has been said, that that period was not proper to be taken as a test of the public spirit on the subject of representation—that it was a moment of national prosperity—and that nothing can be decided for or against representation by that precedent. It was, however, in that moment the seeds of rottenness and dissolution were sown. I thought I saw them at the time, and I have been confirmed in my observation by every thing that has occurred since. I pass over all the period between that time up to the present war, not because it is not fruitful of examples, but because I do not wish to trespass on your time. The present war, say ministers, was popular in its commencement; the same was said of the commencement of the American war. I will not stop to inquire into the truth of the assertion, though it is at least doubtful: I will not deny, that, through the artful machinations of government, a clamor was excited of the interested, which ministers call the voice of the nation. Whatever may have been the case, however, in the outset of the two wars, the progress in the public opinion has been the same in both; and I aver, that, as in the American war, the public opinion had changed, though no change was produced by the public election in 1780, so now, I aver, that for the last two years the present war has been universally unpopular in England, though it has not made its voice to be heard by the choice of representatives. Though the general election has not produced a change of men, yet he must be a dull observer of the public mind, who says, that the general election did not afford a striking proof of a change in the sentiments of the people—for what was

the conduct of the candidates in populous places on the two sides? *We* boasted of having opposed the war: *we* made it our claim, and our appeal to the confidence of the people, that we had resisted every one of the measures by which the government has brought us into our present condition. What was the conduct of the candidates on the other side? It consisted of apologies for their past offence for supporting the war: it consisted of whining and canting explanations, in descriptions of alarms, and not unfrequently in misrepresentation of facts. Such was the feeling conveyed by the general election, it served to convince every deserving man, that if the representatative system had been perfect, or the practice pure, the new Parliament would have decidedly voted against the continuance of the war. Seeing then the conduct they have pursued, can the people have confidence in this house? Can they have confidence in a house that has given their countenance to misrepresentation through the whole course of the war? Suppose the people were to look for the history of the events that have happened in this war, and for the condition of the country to the King's speeches from the throne, and to the addresses of the two houses of Parliament, they would see that in almost every instance his Majesty has declared from the throne, and the house of commons has replied in humble addresses, that our prospects were improved, and that the country was flourishing and prosperous. Look at all the King's speeches, and addresses, since the year 1793, and you will find that this is their general tone and language. And yet this is the house of commons, in which the people of England are to have confidence. Amidst all the failures and sufferings which they have had to deplore, and in their present condition of dreadful and unparalleled calamity, they are

called

called upon to trust to a house of commons that assures them, their prospects and their situation have been gradually improving since the year 1793.

"There has been, at different times, a great deal of dispute about virtual representation. Sir, I am no great advocate for these nice subtilties and special pleadings on the constitution: much depends upon appearance as well as reality. I know well, that a popular body of five hundred and fifty-eight gentlemen, if truly independent of the crown, would be a strong barrier to the people; but the house of commons should not only be, but appear to be, the representative of the people: the system should satisfy the prejudices and the pride, as well as the reason of the people; and you can never expect to give the just impression which a house of commons ought to make on the people, until you derive it unequivocally from them. It is asked, why gentlemen, who were against a parliamentary reform on former occasions, should vote for it now? Ten years ago, men might reasonably object to any reform of the system, who ought now in my opinion, to be governed by motives that are irresistible in its favor. They might look back with something like satisfaction and triumph to former Parliaments, and console themselves with the reflection, that, though in moments of an ordinary kind, in the common course of human events, Parliament might abate from its vigilance, and give a greater degree of confidence than strictly conformable with representative duty; yet there was a point beyond which no artifice of power, no influence of corruption, could carry them: that there were barriers in the British constitution, over which the house of commons never would leap, and that the moment of danger and alarm would be the signal for the return of Parliament to its post. Such might have been the reasoning of gentlemen

tlemen on the experience of former Parliaments; and with this rooted trust in the latent efficacy of Parliament, they might have objected to any attempt that should give scope to views, or cherish hopes of a change in the system itself; but what will the said gentlemen say, after the experience of the last and the present Parliament? What dependence, what trust, what reliance can they have for one vestige of the constitution that is left to us? Or rather, what privilege, what right, what security, has not been already violated?

——*Quid intactum nefasti liquimus?*

And seeing that in no one instance have they hesitated to go the full length of every outrage that was conceived by the minister, that they have been touched by no scruples, deterred by no sense of duty, corrected by no experience of calamity, checked by no admonition, or remonstrance; that they have never made out a single case of inquiry; that they have never interposed a single restraint upon abuse; may not gentlemen consistently feel, that the reform, which they previously thought unnecessary, is now indispensable? We have heard to-day, Sir, all the old arguments about honor on the one side being as likely as honor on the other, and that there are good men on both sides the house; that a man may be a member for a close borough upon the one side of the house, as well as upon the other; and that he may be a good man, sit where he may. All this, Sir, is very idle language; it is not the question at issue: no man disputes the existence of private and individual integrity; but, Sir, this is not representation: if a man comes here as a proprietor of a burgage tenure, he does not come here as the representative of the people. The whole of this system, as it is now carried on, is as outrageous to morality, as it is pernicious to just government. It gives a scandal to our character, which not merely degrades the house of com-

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mons in the eyes of the people, but it does more, it undermines the very principles of integrity in their hearts, and gives a fashion to dishonesty and imposture. They hear of a person giving or receiving four or five thousand pounds as the purchase-money of a seat for a close borough; and they hear the very man who received, and put into his pocket the money, make a loud, and vehement speech in this house against bribery; and they see him perhaps move for the commitment to prison of a poor unfortunate wretch at your bar, who has been convicted in taking a single guinea for his vote in the very borough, perhaps, where he had publicly, and unblushingly sold his influence, though that miserable guinea was necessary to save a family from starving, under the horrors of a war which he had contributed to bring upon the country! Sir, these are things that paralyse you to the heart: these are the things that vitiate the whole system, that spread degeneracy, hypocrisy, and sordid fraud over the country, and take from us the energies of virtue, and sap the foundations of patriotism and spirit. The system that encourages so much vice, ought to be put an end to; and it is no argument, that because it lasted a long time without mischief, it ought now to be continued, when it is found to be pernicious: it is arisen to a height that defeats the very ends of government; it must sink under its own weakness. And this, Sir, is not a case peculiar to itself, but is inseparable from all human institutions. All the writers of eminence upon forms of government have said, that, in order to preserve them, frequent recurrence must be had to their original principle. This is the opinion of MONTESQUIEU, as well as MACHIAVEL. Gentlemen will not be inclined to dispute the authority of the latter on this point at least; and he says, that without this recurrence they grow out of shape, and deviate

viate from their general form. It is only by recurring to former priciples that any government can be kept pure and unabused. But, say gentlemen, if any abuses have crept into our system, have we not a corrective, whose efficacy has been proved, and of which every body approves? Have we not Mr. GRENVILLE's bill as an amendment to the constitution? An amendment it is; an amendment which acknowledges the deficiency. It is an avowal of a defective practice. It is a strong argument for a reform, because it would not be necessary, if the plan of representation were sufficient. But, Sir, there is a lumping consideration, if I may be allowed the phrase, which now more than ever ought to make every man a convert to parliamentary reform: there is an annual revenue of twenty-three millions sterling collected by the executive government from the people. Here, Sir, is the despot of election; here is the new power that is grown up to magnitude; that bears down before it every defensive barrier established by our ancestors for the protection of the people. They had no such tyrant to control; they had no such enemy to oppose. Against every thing which was known, against every thing which was seen, they did provide; but it did not enter into the contemplation of those who established the checks and barriers of our system, that they would ever have to stand against a revenue of twenty millions a year. The whole landed rental of the kingdom is not estimated at more than twenty-five millions a year; and this rental is divided and dispersed over a large body who cannot be supposed to act in concert, or to give to their power the force of combination, and unity; but even if all united, organized, and exerted, has it now to oppose a power nearly equal to itself in one hand, in a hand that has all the means of hostility prepared, and all the resources for action in full activity? But it is said, that, though

though the government is in the receipt of a revenue of twenty-three millions a year, it has not the expenditure of that sum, and that its influence ought not to be calculated from what it receives, but what it has to pay away. I submit, however, to the good sense, and to the personal experience of gentlemen who hear me, if it be not a manifest truth, that influence depends almost as much upon what they have to receive, as upon what they have to pay; whether it does not proceed as much from the submission of the dependant who has a debt to pay, as on the gratitude of the person whose attachment they reward? And if this be true, in the influence which individuals derive from the rentals of their estates, and from the expenditure of that rental, how much more so is it true of government, who, both in the receipt and expenditure of this enormous revenue, are actuated by one invariable principle, that of extending or withholding favor in exact proportion to the submission or resistance to their measures which the individuals make? Compare this revenue, then, with that against which our ancestors were so anxious to protect us, and compare this revenue with all the bulwarks of our constitution in preceding times, and you must acknowledge, that though those bulwarks were sufficient to protect us in the days of King William and Queen Anne, they are not equal to the enemy we have now to resist. But it is said, what will this reform do for us? Will it be a talisman sufficient to retrieve all the misfortunes which we have incurred? I am free to say, that it would not be sufficient, unless it led to reforms of substantial expence, and to reform of all the abuses that have crept into our government. But, at the same time, I think it would do this; I think it would give us the chance, as I said before, of recovery. It would give us, in the first place, a Parliament vigilant and scrupu-

lous; and that would ensure to us a government active and economical. It would prepare the way for every rational improvement, of which, without disturbing the parts, our constitution is susceptible. It would do more; it would open the way for exertions infinitely more extensive than all that we have hitherto made. The right honorable gentleman says, that we have made exertions. True; but what are they in comparison to our necessity? And yet they have sunk us into decrepitude, and threaten us with convulsion. I wish you to be restored to a vigor that shall make you equal to your emergency. But the right honorable gentleman says, that when we consider our comparative situation with that of countries who have taken another line of conduct in the present state of the world, we ought to rejoice; and that our situation is infinitely ſuperior to those who have not pursued the same route. I confess, Sir, I am very much at a loss to conceive what country the right honorable gentleman has in view in this comparison. Does he mean to assert, that the nations who preferred the line of neutrality to that of war, have fallen into a severer calamity than ourselves and the other powers who have embraced the politics of the right honorable gentleman? Does he mean to say, that Sweden, or that Denmark, has suffered more, by observing an imprudent neutrality, than England, or Austria, by wisely plunging themselves into a war? Or does he mean to insinuate, that Prussia has been the victim of its impolicy, in getting out of the conflict on the first occasion? If this be the interpretation of the right honorable gentleman's argument, I do not believe that he will get many persons to subscribe to the justness of his comparison. But, probably, he alludes to the fate of Holland: if this be the object to which he wishes to turn our eyes, he does it unjustly. Holland acted under the despotic mandate

date of that right honorable gentleman; and Holland, whatever she has suffered, whatever may be her present situation, lays her calamities to the charge of England. I cannot then admit of the argument, that our situation is comparatively better than that of the nations who altogether kept out of the war, or being drawn into it in the first instance, corrected their error and restored to themselves the blessings of peace.

"I have detained you, Sir, thus long in replying to the arguments which have been advanced at different periods against the reform of Parliament as a general measure of policy. I come now to consider the specific proposition of my honorable friend, and the arguments that have been brought against it in particular. Let me premise, that however averse gentlemen may be to any specific proposition of reform, if they are friendly to the principle, they ought to vote for the question, because it is merely a motion for leave to bring in a bill, which would be printed in order to give time for deliberate discussion. An opposition to such a motion comes with a very ill grace from the right honorable gentleman; it contradicts his own conduct; it contradicts the policy for which he so strenuously argued. In the year 1785, he moved for leave to bring in a bill on a specific plan, and he fairly called for the support of all those who approved of the principle of reform, whatever might be the latitude of their ideas on the subject; whether they wished for more or less than his proposition, he thought that they should agree to the introduction of the bill, that it might be freely discussed in the committee, in hopes that the united wisdom of the house might shape out something that would be generally acceptable—upon this candid argument I, for one, acted. I did not approve of his specific proposition, and yet I voted with him for leave to

bring in the bill. And this, Sir, has generally happened to me on all the former occasions, when propositions have been made—though I have constantly been a friend to the principle, I had never before seen a specific plan that had my cordial approbation. That which came nearest, and of which I the least disapproved, was the plan of an honorable gentleman who is now no more [Mr. Flood], he was the first person who suggested the idea of extending what might be proper to add to representation, to house-keepers, as to a description of persons the best calculated to give efficacy to the representative system. My honorable friend's plan, built upon this idea, is an improvement of it, since it is not an attempt even to vary the form and outline, much less to new-model the representation of the people: it keeps every thing in its place: it neither varies the number, nor changes the name, nor diverts the course of any part of our system: it corrects, without change: it extends, without destruction of any established right: it restores simply what has been injured by abuse; and reinstates what time has mouldered away. No man can have a right to complain of genuine property assailed; no habit, even no mode of thinking, no prejudice will be wounded: it traces back the path of the constitution, from which we have wandered; but it runs out into no new direction. A noble Lord says, that the county representation must be good; that it must be approved of; be it so; this proposes to leave the county representation where it is; I wish so to leave it. I think that representation ought to be of a compound nature. The counties may be considered as territorial representation, as contradistinguished from popular; but, in order to embrace all that I think necessary, I certainly would not approve of any farther extension of this branch of the representation. It has been asked, whether the rights of corporations

corporations ought not to be maintained? That is a matter for farther discussion; I have no hesitation in saying, my opinion leads the other way; but if it should be thought so, it may be so modified in the bill. There is no reasonable objection to its introduction on account of our not now agreeing with all its parts. My honorable friend, with all his abilities, and all the industry with which he has digested his proposition, does not presume to offer it to you as a perfect plan, nor call upon you to subscribe to it with implicit faith. He does not call upon you to adopt all his notions, nor does he think that every part of his plan will be found to quadrate with the abstract principles of representation: he looks to what is practicable in the condition in which we are placed, not to what a new people might be tempted to hazard. My opinion, however unimportant it may be, goes with the honorable gentleman. I think that there is enough of enterprize and vigor in the plan to restore us to health, and not enough to run us into disorder. I agree with him, because I am firmly of opinion with all the philosophical writers on the subject, that when a country is sunk into a situation of apathy and abuse it can only be recovered by recurring to its first principles.

"Now, Sir, I think that acting on this footing, to extend the right of election to house-keepers is the best and most advisable plan of reform: I think also, that it is the most perfect recurrence to first principles; I do not mean to the first principles of society, nor the abstract principles of representation, but to the first known and recorded principles of our constitution. According to the early history of England, and the highest authorities on our parliamentary constitution, I find this to be the case. It is the opinion of the celebrated GLANVILLE, that in all cases where no particular right intervenes, the com-

mon law right of paying scot and lot was the right of election in this land : this, Sir, was the opinion of Serjeant GLANVILLE and of one of the most celebrated committees, of which our parliamentary history has to boast; and this, in my opinion, is the safest line of conduct you can adopt. But it is said, that extending the right of voting to housekeepers may in some respects be compared to universal suffrage. I have always deprecated universal suffrage, not so much on account of the confusion to which it would lead, as because I think that we should in reality lose the very object we desire to obtain; because I think it would in its nature embarrass and prevent the deliberative voice of the country from being heard. I do not think that you augment and multiply the deliberative body of the people, by counting all the heads, but that in truth you confer on individuals by this means the power of drawing forth numbers, who, without deliberation, would implicitly act upon their will. My opinion is, that the best plan of representation is that which shall bring into activity the greatest number of independent voters, and that that is defective which would bring forth those, whose situation and condition takes from them the power of deliberation. I can have no conception of that being a good plan of election, which should enable individuals to bring regiments to the poll. I hope gentlemen will not smile, if I endeavour to illustrate my position, by referring to the example of the other sex. In all the theories and projects of the most absurd speculation, it has never been suggested, that it would be advisable to extend the elective suffrage to the female sex; and yet, justly respecting, as we must do, the mental powers, the acquirements, the discrimination, and the talents of the women of England in the present improved state of society; knowing the opportunities which they have for

acquiring knowledge; that they have interests as dear and as important as our own, it must be the genuine feeling of every gentleman who hears me, that all the superior classes of the female sex of England must be more capable of exercising the elective suffrage with deliberation and propriety, than the uninformed individuals of the lowest class of men, to whom the advocates of universal suffrage would extend it; and yet, why has it never been imagined, that the right of election should extend to women? Why, but because by the law of nations, and perhaps also by the law of nature, that sex is dependent on ours; and because therefore their voices would be governed by the relation in which they stand to society? Therefore it is, Sir, that with the exceptions of companies, in which the right of voting merely affects property, it has never been in the contemplation of the most absurd theorists to extend the elective franchise to the sex. The desideratum to be obtained is independent voters, and that I say would be a defective system, that should bring regiments of soldiers, of servants, and of persons whose low condition neccessarily curbed the independence of their minds. That then I take to be the most perfect system which shall include the greatest number of independent electors, and exclude the greatest number of those who are necessarily by their condition dependent. I think that the plan of my honorable friend draws this line as discreetly as it can be drawn, and it by no means approaches to universal suffrage. It would neither admit, except in particular instances, soldiers, nor servants. Universal suffrage would extend the right to three millions of men; but there are not more than seven hundred thousand houses that would come within the plan of my honorable friend; and when it is considered that out of these some are the property of minors, and that some

persons have two or more houses, it would fix the number of voters for Great Britain at six hundred thousand; and I call upon gentlemen to say, whether this would not be sufficiently extensive for deliberation on the one hand, and yet sufficiently limited for order on the other. This has no similarity with universal suffrage; and yet, taking the number of representatives as they now stand, it would give to every member about fifteen hundred constituents. But it is said, would even this plan of reform protect us against the consequences of bribery and corruption? I do not affect to say, that it would: I do not believe, that, in the present state of society, we can be altogether free from this evil; no laws will be found sufficient to eradicate an evil which example has so banefully established. We have for a course of years inculcated and habituated the people to the sordid vice, and we certainly cannot wonder that a poor man should not scruple to take five guineas for his vote, when he knows that the noble Lord in the neighbourhood took four or five thousand. But it is to be hoped, that when this baneful encouragement is removed, the regulations that would be introduced would tend to diminish, if not altogether remove, the evil. Among those regulations, that of shortening the duration of Parliaments would be one strong corrective, and this I think might be done with great convenience and facility, by the plan upon which the elections would be made.

"It has often been a question, both within and without these walls, how far representatives ought to be bound by the instructions of their constituents. It is a question upon which my mind is not altogether made up, though I own I lean to the opinion that having to legislate for the empire, they ought not to be altogether guided by instructions that may be dictated by local interests. I cannot, however, approve of the very ungracious manner

in which I sometimes hear expressions of contempt for the opinion of constituents: they are made with a very bad grace in the first session of a septennial Parliament, particularly if they should come from individuals who in the concluding session of a former Parliament did not scruple to court the favor of the very same constituents, by declaring that they voted against their conscience in compliance with their desire, as was the case with an honorable alderman of the city of London. But, Sir, there is one class of constituents, whose instructions it is considered as the implicit duty of members to obey. When gentlemen represent populous towns and cities, then it is disputable, whether they ought to obey their voice, or follow the dictates of their own conscience; but if they represent a noble Lord, or a noble Duke, then it becomes no longer a question of doubt: he is not considered as a man of honor who does not implicitly obey the orders of his single constituent. He is to have no conscience, no liberty, no discretion of his own; he is sent here by my Lord this, or the Duke of that; and if he does not obey the instructions he receives, he is not to be considered as a man of honor and a gentleman. Such is the mode of reasoning that prevails in this house. Is this fair? Is there any reciprocity in this conduct? Is a gentleman to be permitted, without dishonor, to act in opposition to the sentiments of the city of London, of the city of Westminster, or of Bristol: but if he dares to disagree with the Duke, or Lord, or Baronet, whose representative he is, that he must be considered as unfit for the society of men of honor?

"This, Sir, is the chicane and tyranny of corruption; and this, at the same time, is called representation. In a very great degree the county members are held in the same sort of thraldom. A number of peers possess an overweening

overweening interest in the county; and a gentleman is no longer permitted to hold his situation than as he acts agreeably to the dictates of those powerful families. Let us see how the whole of this stream of coruption has been diverted from the side of the people to that of the crown; with what a constant persevering art, every man who is possessed of influence in counties, corporations, or boroughs, that will yield to the solicitations of the court, is drawn over to that phalanx which is opposed to the small remnant of popular election. I have looked, Sir, to the machinations of the present minister in that way, and I find that including the number of additional titles, the right honorable gentleman has made no fewer than one hundred and fifteen peers in the course of his administration; that is to say, he has bestowed no fewer than one hundred and fifteen titles, including new creations and elevations from one rank to another. How many of these are to be ascribed to national services, and how many to parliamentary interest, I leave the house to inquire. The country is not blind to these arts of influence, and it is impossible that we can expect them to continue to endure them.

"A noble Lord has quoted a most able book on the subject of the French Revolution, the work of Mr. MACKINTOSH, and I rejoice to see that gentlemen begin now to acknowledge the merits of that eminent writer, and that the impression it made upon me at the time is now felt and acknowledged even by those persons who disputed its authority. The noble Lord [HAWKESBURY] has quoted Mr. MACKINTOSH's book on account of the observation which he made on the article which relates to the French elections: he thought that their plan would lead to the evil of universal suffrage. I have not forgot the sarcasms that were flung out on my approbation of

this

this celebrated work; that I was told of my *new library, stuffed with the jargon of the rights of man;* it now appears, however, that I did not greatly over-rate this performance, and they now quote Mr. MACKINTOSH as an authority, who before treated him with splenetic scorn. Now, Sir, with all my sincere admiration of this book, I think the weakest and most objectionable passage in it is that which the noble Lord has quoted: I think it is that which the learned author would himself be the most desirous to correct. Without descending to minute and equivocal theories, and without inquiring farther into the rights of man than what is necessary to our purpose, there is one position in which we shall all agree, that man has the right to be well governed. Now it is obvious, that no people can be satisfied with a government from the constitueut parts of which they are excluded. When we look to the kingdom of Scotland, we see a state of representation so monstrous and absurd, so ridiculous and revolting, that it is good for nothing except perhaps to be placed by the side of the English, in order to set off our defective system, by the comparison of one still more defective. In Scotland there is no shadow even of representation; there is neither a representation of property for the counties, nor of population for the towns. It is not what we understand in England by freeholders, that elect in the counties: the right is vested in what is called the superiorities; and it might so happen that all the members for the counties of Scotland might come here without having the vote of a single person who had a foot of property in the land. This is an extreme case; but it is within the limits of their system. In the boroughs, their magistrates are self-elected, and therefore the members have nothing to do with the population of the towns.

"Now,

"Now, Sir, having shewn this to be the state of the country, and the state of our representation, I ask you what remedy there can be other than reform? What can we expect, as the necessary result of a system so defective and vicious in all its parts, but increased and increasing calamities, until we shall be driven to a convulsion that would overthrow every thing? If we do not apply this remedy in time, our fate is inevitable. Our most illustrious patriots, and the men whose memories are the dearest to Englishmen, have long ago pointed out to us parliamentary reform as the only means of redressing national grievance. I need not inform you, that Sir GEORGE SAVILLE was its most strenuous advocate: I need not tell you that the venerable and illustrious CAMDEN was through life a steady adviser of seasonable reform: nay, Sir, to a certain degree we have the authority of Mr. BURKE himself for the propriety of correcting the abuses of our system: for gentlemen will remember the memorable answer that he gave to the argument that was used for our right of taxing America, on the score of their being virtually represented; and that they were in the same situation as Manchester, Birmingham, and Sheffield. What! said Mr. BURKE, when the people of America look up to you with the eyes of filial love and affection, will you turn to them the *shameful* parts of the constitution? With, then, the concurring testimony of so many authorities for correcting our abuses, why do we hesitate? Can we do any harm by experiment? Can we possibly put ourselves into a worse condition than we are? What advantages we shall gain, I know not: I think we shall gain many: I think we shall gain at least the chance of warding off the evil of confusion growing out of accumulated discontent: I think that we shall save ourselves

from

from the evil that has fallen upon Ireland: I think that we shall satisfy the moderate, and take even from the violent, if any such there be, the powers of increasing their numbers, and of making converts to their schemes. This, Sir, is my solemn opinion, and upon this ground it is that I recommend, with earnestness and solicitude, the proposition of my honorable friend.

"And now, Sir, before I sit down, allow me to make a single observation, with respect to the character, and conduct of those who have, in conjunction with myself, felt it their duty to oppose the progress of this disastrous war. I hear it said, you do nothing but mischief when you are here, and yet we should be sorry to see you away. I do not know how we shall be able to satisfy the gentlemen who feel towards us in this way: if we can neither do our duty without mischief, nor please them with doing nothing, I know but of one way by which we can give them content, and that is by putting an end to our existence. With respect to myself, and I believe I can also speak for others, I do not feel it consistent with my duty totally to secede from this house. I have no such intention; but, Sir, I have no hesitation in saying, that, after seeing the conduct of this house; after seeing them give to ministers their confidence and support, upon convicted failure, imposition, and incapacity; after seeing them deaf and blind to the consequences of a career that penetrates the hearts of all other men with alarm, and that neither reason, experience, nor duty are sufficiently powerful to influence them to oppose the conduct of government, I certainly do think that I may devote more of my time to my private pursuits, and to the retirement which I love, than I have hitherto done: I certainly think I need not devote much of it to fruitless exertions, and to idle talk in this house. Whenever it shall appear that my

efforts may contribute in any degree to restore us to the situation from which the confidence of this house in a desperate system and an incapable administration has so suddenly reduced us, I shall be found ready to discharge my duty.

"Sir, I have done! I have given my advice. I propose the remedy, and fatal will it be for England, if pride and prejudice much longer continue to oppose it. The remedy, which is proposed, is simple, easy, and practicable; it does not touch the vitals of the constitution, and I sincerely believe it will restore us to peace and harmony. Do you think that you must not come to parliamentary reform soon? And is it not better to come to it now, when you have the power of deliberation, than when perhaps it may be extorted from you by convulsion? There is as yet time to frame it with freedom and discussion; it will even yet go to the people with the grace and favor of a spontaneous act. What will it be, when it is extorted from you with indignation and violence? God forbid that this should be the case; but now is the moment to prevent it; and now, I say, wisdom and policy recommend it to you, when you may enter into all the considerations to which it leads, rather than to postpone it to a time, when you will have nothing to consider, but the number and force of those who demand it. It is asked, whether liberty has not gained much of late years, and whether the popular branch ought not therefore to be content? To this, I answer, that, if liberty has gained much, power has gained more. Power has been indefatigable, and unwearied in its encroachments; every thing has run in that direction through the whole course of the present reign. This was the opinion of Sir George Saville, of the Marquis of Rockingham, and of all the virtuous men, who, in their public life proved themselves

selves

selves to be advocates for the rights of the people. They saw and deplored the tendency of the court; they saw that there was a determinate spirit in the secret advisers of the crown to advance its power, and to encourage no administration that should not bend itself to that pursuit. Accordingly, through the whole reign no administration, who cherished notions of a different kind, has been permitted to last, and nothing, therefore, or next to nothing, has been gained to the side of the people, but every thing to the crown in the course of the reign. During the whole of this period, we have had no more than three administrations, one for twelve months, one for nine, and one for three months, that acted upon the popular principles of the early part of this century. Nothing, therefore, I say has been gained to the people, whilst the constant current has run towards the crown; and God knows what is to be the consequence, both to the crown and country. I believe we are come to the last moment of possible remedy. I believe that at this moment the enemies of both are few; but I firmly believe, that what has been seen in Ireland, will be experienced also here; and that, if we are to go in the same career with convention-bills and acts of exasperation of all kinds, the few will soon become the many, and that we shall have to pay a severe retribution for our present pride. What a noble Lord said some time ago of France, may be applicable to this very subject. What, said he, negotiate with France? With men, whose hands are reeking with the blood of their sovereign? What, shall we degrade ourselves by going to Paris, and there asking in humble diplomatic language *to be on a good understanding with them?* Gentlemen will remember these lofty words; and yet we have come to this humiliation; we have negotiated with France? and I shall not be surprized to see the noble Lord himself [HAWKESBURY] going to Paris, not at the

the head of his regiment, but on a diplomatic commission to those very regicides, to pray to be on a good understanding with them. Shall we then be blind to the lessons, which the events of the world exhibit to our view? Pride, obstinacy, and insult, must end in concessions, and those concessions must be humble in proportion to our unbecoming pride. Now is the moment to prevent all these degradations: the monarchy, the aristocracy, the people themselves may now be saved: it is only necessary at this moment to conquer our own passions. Let those ministers whose evil genius has brought us to our present condition, retire from the post to which they are unequal. I have no hesitation in saying, that the present administration neither can nor ought to remain in place: let them retire from his Majesty's councils; and then let us, with an earnest desire of recovering the country, pursue this moderate scheme of reform, under the auspices of men who are likely to conciliate the opinion of the people. I do not, Sir, speak this from personal ambition. A new administration ought to be formed: I have no desire, no wish of making a part of any such administration; and I am sure that such an arrangement is feasible, and that it is capable of being done without me. My first and chief desire is to see this great end accomplished: I have no desire to be the person, or to be one of the persons to do it; but though my wish is for retirement, I shall always be ready to give my free and firm support to any administration that shall restore to the country its outraged rights, and re-establish its strength upon the basis of free representation; and therefore, Sir, I shall certainly give my vote for the proposition of my honourable friend."

On the division of the house, the numbers were for Mr. GREY's motion, 93—against it 258.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

### ŒCONOMICAL REFORM.

IN the course of the American war, the rapid and continual increase of the national debt had excited a very just alarm at the magnitude of the contest in which the country was engaged,—at the prodigious expence with which that contest was attended,—and at the proofs which every day appeared of prodigality, corruption, and a shameful waste of the public money. Early in the year 1780, popular meetings were convened in most of the principal towns and counties all over the kingdom; and petitions to parliament were drawn up, agreed to, and presented, all of them praying for a correction of abuses in the public expenditure, and many of them extending to a reform in the commons house of parliament. It was upon this occasion that Mr. BURKE brought forward his famous plan, confining himself to what he called the *omnipotence of œconomy;* its power to bind up and close the bleeding arteries of profusion, and to invigorate the natural constitution of the state, by reducing the fatal and overgrown influence of the crown. As some steps towards the attainment of so desirable an end, he moved for leave to bring in certain bills for the better regulation of his Majesty's civil establishments; for the sale of forest and other crown lands; and for more profitably uniting to the crown the principality of Wales, the counties palatine of Chester and Lancaster, and the duchy of Cornwall. The powers of Mr. BURKE's genius and fancy were never, perhaps, more fully displayed than in the embellishment

of so unpromising a subject. The necessary minuteness of detail, the multiplicity of local circumstances and personal considerations, on which the whole plan was founded, were enlivened by sportive sallies, and set off with all the charms of eloquence, all the beauties of poetical description. Mr. DUNNING said, "that it must remain as a monument, to be handed down to posterity, of the uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance of the honorable gentleman. He had undertaken a task big with labor and difficulty; a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated: yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honorable gentleman's mind, his vast capacity and happy conception, that, in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature, and opposite in principle, was so skilfully arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependent on each other; and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to almost any mind, tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it."

The opening of Mr. BURKE's speech was well calculated to excite the most serious attention. "I rise," said he, "in acquittal of my engagement to the house, in obedience to the strong and just requisition of my constituents, and, I am persuaded, in conformity to the unanimous wishes of the whole nation, to submit to the wisdom of Parliament, a plan of reform in the constitution of several parts of the public œconomy. I have endeavoured that this plan should include in its execution, a considerable reduction of important expence; that it should effect a conversion of unprofitable titles into a productive estate; that it

should

should lead to, and indeed almost compel, a provident administration of such sums of public money as must remain under discretionary trusts; that it should render the debts on the civil establishment (which must ultimately affect national strength, and national credit) so very difficult as to become next to impracticable. But what, I confess, was uppermost with me, what I bent the whole force of my mind to, was the reduction of that corrupt influence, which is itself the perennial spring of all prodigality and of all disorder; which loads us more than millions of debt; which takes away vigor from our arms, wisdom from our councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most venerable parts of our constitution."

After some remarks on the ungraciousness of every attempt at reform, he enters upon his task with tremor and delicacy, but with a ſtrong conviction also, that an early dereliction of abuse is the direct interest of government. "Early reformations," said he, "are amicable arrangements with a friend in power; late reformations are terms imposed upon a conquered enemy: early reformations are made in cold blood; late reformations are made under a state of inflammation. In that state of things, the people behold in government nothing that is respectable. They see the abuse, and they will see nothing else—they fall into the temper of a furious populace provoked at the disorder of a house of ill fame; they never attempt to correct or regulate; they go to work by the shortest way—they abate the nuisance—they pull down the house." But, he very judiciously adds, "that, as it is the interest of government that reformation should be early, it is the interest of the people that it should be temperate; because a temperate reform is per-

manent—it has a principle of growth, and leaves room for farther improvement."

In his proposed plan of reform, he therefore kept those two ends in view, that it should have both an early and a temperate operation;—that it should be substantial;—that it should be systematic;—that it should rather strike at the first cause of prodigality and corrupt influence, than attempt to follow them in all their effects. "If," said he, "we do not go to the very origin and first ruling cause of grievances, we do nothing. What does it signify to turn abuses out of one door, if we are to let them in at another? What does it signify to promote œconomy upon a measure, and to suffer it to be subverted in the principle? Our ministers are far from being wholly to blame for the present ill order which prevails. Whilst institutions directly repugnant to good management are suffered to remain, no effectual or laſting reform can be introduced."

Being resolved not to proceed in an arbitrary manner to change the settled state of things, but quietly to remove whatever stood in the way of œconomy, he began with taking a comprehensive view of the state of the country,—a sort of survey of its jurisdictions, its eſtates, its establishments; and then pointed out the various objects of correction or regulation, all reduced to one or other of the following principles or fundamental rules, by which the great work of reform was to be accomplished:

*First*, All jurisdictions which furnish more matter of expence, more temptation to oppression, or more means and inſtruments of corrupt influence, than advantage to juſtice or political administration, ought to be abolished.

*Secondly*,

*Secondly*, All public estates, which are more ſubvervient to the purposes of vexing, overawing, and influencing those who hold under them, and to the expence of perception and management, than of benefit to the revenue, ought, upon every principle, both of revenue and of freedom, to be disposed of.

*Thirdly*, All offices, which bring more charge than proportional advantage to the state; all offices which may be engrafted on others, uniting and simplifying their duties, ought in the first case to be taken away; and in the second, to be consolidated.

*Fourthly*, All such offices ought to be abolished as obstruct the prospect of the general superintendant of finance; which destroy his superintendancy; which disable him from foreseeing and providing for charges as they may occur; from preventing expence in its origin, checking it in its progress, or securing its application to its proper purposes. A minister under whom expences can be made without his knowledge, can never say what it is that he can spend, or what it is that he can save.

*Fifthly*, It is proper to establish an invariable order in all payments; which will prevent partiality; which will give preference to services, not according to the importunity of the demandant, but the rank and order of their utility or their justice.

*Sixthly*, It is right to reduce every establishment, and every part of an establishment (as nearly as possible) to certainty, the life of all good order and good management.

*Seventhly*, All subordinate treasuries, as the nurseries of mismanagement, and as naturally drawing to themselves as much money as they can, keeping it as long as they can, and accounting for it as late as they can, ought to be

 dissolved.

dissolved. They have a tendency to perplex and distract the public accounts, and to excite a suspicion of government even beyond the extent of their abuse.

Under the authority and with the guidance of those principles, Mr. BURKE proceeded to the various objects of his proposed reform; and began with observing, that whoever took a view of the kingdom in a cursory manner, would imagine that he beheld a solid, compacted, uniform system of monarchy. But on examining it more nearly, you find much eccentricity and confusion. It is not a monarchy in strictness; but, as in the Saxon times this country was a *heptarchy*, it is now a strange sort of *pentarchy*, divided into five several distinct principalities, besides the supreme. There is indeed this difference from the Saxon times, that as in the itinerant exhibitions of the stage, for want of a complete company, they are obliged to throw a variety of parts on their chief performer; so our sovereign condescends himself to act, not only the principal, but all the subordinate parts in the play. Cross a brook, and you lose the king of England; but you have some comfort in coming again under his Majesty, though "shorn of his beams," and no more than prince of Wales. Go to the north, and you find him dwindle to a duke of Lancaster: turn to the west of that north, and he pops upon you in the humble character of earl of Chester: travel a few miles on, the earl of Chester disappears, and the king surprises you again as count palatine of Lancaster: if you travel beyond Mount Edgecombe, you find him once more in his incognito, and he is duke of Cornwall; so that, quite fatigued and satiated with this dull variety, you are infinitely refreshed when you return to the sphere of his proper splendor.

But the great evil in every one of those principalities was a regular establishment of considerable expence, and most

most domineering influence; and as his Majesty submitted to appear in such a state of subordination to himself, his loyal peers and faithful commons attended his royal transformations, and were not so nice as to refuse to nibble at those crumbs of emoluments, which consoled their petty metamorphoses. Every one of those principalities had the apparatus of a kingdom, for the jurisdiction over a few private eftates; and the formality and charge of the exchequer of Great Britain, for collecting the rents of a country 'squire. The duchy and county palatine of Lancaster did not yield on an average four thousand pounds a year, clear to the crown. As to Wales, and the county palatine of Chester, it was a matter of doubt whether their productive exchequer yielded any returns at all; yet this revenue was more faithfully applied to its purposes than any of the rest, as it existed for the sole purpose of multiplying offices, and extending influence.

Here Mr. BURKE introduces a very laughable description of an attempt made by the minister to improve the local influence of the principality of Wales, and to transfer it to the fund of general corruption. The orator presents to our view a Mr. JOHN PROBERT, a knight-errant, dubbed by the noble lord in the blue ribbon, and sent to search for revenues and adventures upon the mountains of Wales. But the *Preux Chevalier* was no sooner arrived on the confines, than he found all Wales in arms to meet him. Since the invasion of king EDWARD, and the massacre of the bards, there never was such a tumult, and alarm, and uproar, through the region of *Prestatyn*. *Snowdon* shook to its base—*Cader Edris* was loosened from its foundations. The fury of litigious war blew her horn on the mountains. The rocks poured down their goat-herds, and the deep caverns vomitted out

their miners. Every thing above ground, and every thing under ground, was in arms. The knight went to look for revenue, like his masters upon other occasions; and, like his masters, he found rebellion. The wise Britons thought it more reasonable that the poor, wasted, decrepid revenue of the principality should die a natural than a violent death. They chose that their ancient moss-grown castles should moulder into decay, under the silent touches of time, and the slow formality of an oblivious and drowsy exchequer, than that they should be battered down all at once by the lively efforts of a pensioned engineer [Mr. PROBERT had been appointed with a pension of 300*l.* a year from the said principality, to try whether he could improve its revenue]. As it is the fortune of the noble lord, under whose auspices the enterprize had been set on foot, frequently to provoke resistance, so it was his rule and nature to yield to that resistance *in all cases whatsoever*. He submitted with spirit to the spirited remonstrances of the Welsh. Mr. PROBERT gave up his adventure, and keeps his pension—and so ends "the famous history of the revenue adventures of the bold baron NORTH, and the good knight PROBERT, upon the mountains of Vinodotia."

It was nearly the same with the revenues of all the other principalities—to do nothing with them was extinction—to improve them was oppression—they all abounded with ridiculous fooleries, which served no other purpose than to keep alive corrupt hope and servile dependence. Mr. BURKE therefore proposed to unite all the five principalities to the crown, and to its ordinary jurisdiction;—to abolish all those offices that produce an useless and chargeable separation from the body of the people;—to compensate those who did not hold their offices (if any such there were) at the pleasure of the crown;

crown;—to extinguish vexatious titles by an act of short limitation;—to sell, those unprofitable estates which supported useless jurisdictions; and to turn a tenant-right into a fee, on such moderate terms as would be better for the state than its present right, and which it would be impossible for any rational tenant to refuse. He wished to extend a similar plan of reform to the landed estates of the crown,—to throw them into the mass of private property; by which they would come through the course of circulation, and through the political secretions of the state, into well-regulated revenue.

Mr. BURKE's next step was to the supreme body of the civil government itself, which he approached, he said, with that awe and reverence with which a young physician approaches to the cure of the disorders of his patient. "Upon this ground of the civil list, the first thing in dignity and charge that attracts our notice," says Mr. BURKE, "is the royal household. This establishment, in my opinion, is exceedingly abusive in its constitution. It is formed in many respects upon manners and customs that have long since expired. In the first place, it is formed in many respects upon *feudal principles*. In the feudal times it was not uncommon, even among subjects, for the lowest offices to be held by considerable persons; persons as unfit by their incapacity, as improper from their rank, to occupy such employments. They were held by patent, sometimes for life, and sometimes by inheritance. If my memory does not deceive me, a person of no slight consideration held the office of patent hereditary cook to an earl of Warwick. The earl of Warwick's soups, I fear, were not the better for the dignity of his kitchen. There was some reason in ancient necessities for these ancient customs. Protection was wanted, and the domestic tie, though not the highest, was the

the closest. The king's household has not only several strong traces of this *feudality*, but it is formed also upon the principles of *a body corporate:* it has its own magistrates, courts, and bye-laws. This might be necessary in the ancient times, in order to have a government within itself, capable of regulating the vast and often unruly multitude, which composed and attended it. This was the origin of the ancient court, called the *Green Cloth*, composed of the marshal, treasurer, and other great officers of the household, with certain clerks. The rich subjects of the kingdom, who had formerly the same establishments, (only on a reduced scale) have since altered their œconomy, and turned the course of their expence from the maintenance of vast establishments within their walls, to the employment of a great variety of independent trades abroad. Their influence is lessened; but a mode of accommodation, and a style of splendor suited to the manners of the times, has been increased. Royalty itself has insensibly followed; and the royal household has been carried away by the resistless tide of manners; but with this very material difference, private men have got rid of the establishments along with the reasons of them, whereas the royal household has lost all that was stately and venerable in the antique manners, without retrenching any thing of the cumbrous charge of a Gothic establishment. But when the reason of old establishments is gone, it is absurd to preserve nothing but the burthen of them. This is superstitiously to embalm a carcase not worth an ounce of the gums that are used to preserve it. It is to burn precious oils in the tomb: it is to offer meat and drink to the dead, not so much an honor to the deceased, as a disgrace to the survivors. Our palaces are vast inhospitable halls. There the bleak winds, there "Boreas, and Eurus, and Caurus, and Argestes loud" howling through the vacant

lobbies,

lobbies, and clattering the doors of deserted guard-rooms, appal the imagination, and conjure up the grim spectres of departed tyrants, the Saxon, the Norman, and the Dane, the stern EDWARDS, and fierce HENRIES, who stalk from desolation to desolation, through the dreary vacuity and melancholy succession of chill and comfortless chambers. When this tumult subsides, a dead and still more frightful silence would reign in this desert, if every now and then the tacking of hammers did not announce that those constant attendants upon all courts in all ages, jobs, were still alive, for whose sake alone it is, that any trace of ancient grandeur is suffered to remain. These palaces are a true emblem of some governments: the inhabitants are decayed; but the governors and magistrates still flourish. They put me in mind of Old Sarum, where the representatives, more in number than the constituents, only serve to inform us, that this was once a place of trade, and sounding with the "busy hum of men," though now you can only trace the streets by the colour of the corn, and its sole manufacture is in members of parliament. These old establishments were formed also on a third principle, still more adverse to the living œconomy of the age. They were formed, Sir, on the principle of *purveyance* and *receipt in kind*. In the former days, when the household was vast, and the supply scanty and precarious, the royal purveyors, sallying forth from under the Gothic portcullis to purchase provision with power and prerogative instead of money, brought home the plunder of an hundred markets, and all that could be seized from a flying and hiding country, and deposited their spoil in a hundred caverns, with each its keeper. There every commodity, received in its rawest condition, went through all the process which fitted it for use. This inconvenient

receipt

receipt produced an œconomy suited only to itself. It multiplied offices beyond all measure, buttery, pantry, and all that rabble of places, which, though profitable to the holders, and expensive to the state, are almost too mean to mention.

"I do not say, Sir, that all these establishments, whose principle is gone, have been systematically kept up for influence solely; neglect had its share. But this I am sure of, that a consideration of influence has hindered any one from attempting to pull them down. For the purposes of influence, and for those purposes only, are retained half at least of the household establishments. No revenue, no not a royal revenue, can exist under the accumulated charge of ancient establishment, modern luxury, and parliamentary political corruption. If therefore we aim at regulating this household, the question will be, whether we ought to œconomize by *detail*, or by *principle?* The example we have had of the success of an attempt to œconomize by detail, and under establishments adverse to the attempt, may tend to decide this question. At the beginning of his Majesty's reign, Lord TALBOT came to the administration of a great department in the household. I believe no man ever entered into his Majesty's service, or into the service of any prince, with a more clear integrity, or with more zeal and affection for the interest of his master; and, I must add, with abilities for a still higher service." Œconomy was then announced as a maxim of the reign.

This noble Lord, therefore, made several attempts towards a reform. In the year 1777, when the King's civil list debts came last to be paid, he explained very fully the success of his undertaking. He told the house of Lords, that he had attempted to reduce the charges of the

the King's tables and his kitchen. The thing, Sir, was not below him. He knew that there is nothing interesting in the concerns of men whom we love and honor, that is beneath our attention. "Love," says one of our old poets, "esteems no office mean;" and with still more spirit, "entire affection scorneth nicer hands." Frugality, Sir, is founded on the principle, that all riches have limits. A royal household, grown enormous even in the meanest departments, may weaken and perhaps destroy all energy in the highest offices of the state. The gorging a royal kitchen may stint and famish the negotiations of a kingdom. Therefore the object was worthy of his, was worthy of any man's attention.

In consequence of this noble Lord's resolution (as he told the other house) he reduced several tables, and put the persons entitled to them upon board wages, much to their own satisfaction. But, unluckily, subsequent duties requiring constant attendance, it was not possible to prevent their being fed where they were employed; and thus this first step towards œconomy doubled the expence.

There was another disaster far more doleful than this. I shall state it, as the cause of that misfortune lies at the bottom of almost all our prodigality. Lord TALBOT attempted to reform the kitchen; but such, as he well observed, is the consequence of having duty done by one person, whilst another enjoys the emoluments, that he found himself frustrated in all his designs. On that rock his whole adventure split—his whole scheme of œconomy was dashed to pieces; his department became more expensive than ever—the civil debt accumulated—Why? It was truly from a cause which, though perfectly adequate to the effect, one would not have instantly guessed —it was *because the turnspit in the King's kitchen was a*

*member*

*member of Parliament.* The King's domestic servants were all undone—his tradesmen remained unpaid and became bankrupt—*because the turnspit in the King's kitchen was a member of Parliament.* His Majesty's slumbers were interrupted; his pillow was stuffed with thorns; and his peace of mind entirely broken—*because the King's turnspit was a member of Parliament.* The judges were unpaid, the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way; the foreign ministers remained inactive and unprovided; the system of Europe was dissolved; the chain of our alliances was broken; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were stopped—*because the King's turnspit was a member of Parliament.* Such, Sir, was the situation of affairs, and such the cause of that situation, when his Majesty came a second time to Parliament, to desire the payment of those debts which the employment of its members in various offices visible and invisible had occasioned. I believe that a like fate will attend every attempt at œconomy by detail under similar circumstances, and in every department.

To avoid frittering and crumbling down the attention by a blind unsystematic obfervance of every trifle, it has ever been found to be the best way to do all things which are great in the total amount, and minute in the component parts, by a *general contract.* No dealing is exempt from the possibility of fraud. But by a contract on a matter certain, you have this advantage, you are sure to know the utmoft *extent* of the fraud to which you are subject. By a contract with a person in *his own trade* you are sure you shall not suffer by want of skill.—But what skill can members of Parliament obtain in that low kind of province? What pleasure can they have in the execution of that kind of duty? And if they should neglect it, how does it affect their interest, when we know that

it is their vote in Parliament, and not their diligence in cookery or catering, that recommends them to their office, or keeps them in it?

I therefore propose that the King's tables should be classed by the steward of the household, and should be contracted for according to their rank, by the head, or cover; that the estimate and circumstance of the contract should be carried to the treasury to be approved; and that its faithful and satisfactory performance should be reported there previous to any payment; that there, and there only, should the payment be made. I propose that men should be contracted with only in their proper trade; and that no member of Parliament should be capable of such contract. By this plan almost all the infinite offices under the lord Steward may be spared, to the extreme simplification, and to the far better execution of every one of his functions.

The same clue of principle leads us through the labyrinth of the other departments. What, Sir, is there in the office of the *great wardrobe* that may not be executed by the lord chamberlain himself? He has an honorable appointment; he has time sufficient to attend to the duty; and he has the vice-chamberlain to assist him. Why should he not deal also by contract for all things belonging to this office, and carry his estimates first, and the report of the execution in its proper time for payment directly to the board of treasury itself? By a single operation, the expences of a department, which for naked walls, or walls hung with cobwebs, has in a few years cost the crown 150,000 *l.* may at length hope for regulation?

To what end, Sir, does the office of removing wardrobe serve at all? Why should a jewel office exist, for the sole purpose of taxing the King's gifts of plate? Its object falls naturally within the *chamberlain's* province, and

 ought

ought to be under his care and inspection without any fee.

Why should an office of the robes exist, when that of *groom of the stole* is a sinecure, and that this is a proper object of his department? For the payment of these useless establishments there are no less than three useless treasurers, two to hold a purse, and one to play with a stick. All the proper officers, servants, and tradsemen, may be paid in proper classes and times with great simplicity and order at the exchequer.

The *board of works*, which, in the seven years preceding 1777, has cost towards 400,000 *l.* and has not cost less in proportion from the beginning of the reign, is under the very same description of all the other ill-contrived establishments. For all this expence we do not see a building of the size and importance of a pigeon-house. The good works of that board of works are as carefully concealed as other good works ought to be. They are perfectly invisible; but though it is the perfection of charity to be concealed, it is, Sir, the property and glory of magnifience to appear and stand forward to the eye.

That board, which ought to be a concern of builders and such like, and of none else, is turned into a junto of members of Parliament. That office too has a treasury and a paymaster of its own; and lest the arduous affairs of that unimportant exchequer should be too fatiguing, that paymaster has a deputy to partake his profits, and relieve his cares. I therefore, propose to pull down this whole ill-contrived scaffolding which obstructs rather than forwards our public works,—to take away its treasury,—to put the whole into the hands of a real builder, who shall not be a member of Parliament—and to oblige him by a previous estimate and final payment to appear twice at

at the treasury, before the public can be loaded. The King's gardens are to come under a similar regulation.

The *mint*, though not a department of the household, has the same vices. It is a great expence to the nation, chiefly for the sake of members of Parliament. It has its officers of parade and dignity. It has *its* treasury too, yet is nothing but a manufacture; and ought to be undertaken upon the principles of one, that is, for the best and cheapest execution, by a contract upon proper securities, and under proper regulations.

"The *artillery* is a far greater object: it is a military concern; but having an affinity in its defects with the establishment I am now speaking of, I think it best to speak of it along with them. It is, I conceive, an establishment not well suited to its martial, though exceedingly well calculated for its parliamentary purposes. For a reform of this office, I propose to restore things to their just distribution—to render the civil subordinate to the military—and this will annihilate the greatest part of the expence. I propose to send the military branch to the army, and the naval to the admiralty; and I intend to perfect the whole detail by a commission of competent officers in both departments.

By these regulations taken together, besides the three subordinate treasuries in the lesser principalities, five other subordinate treasuries are suppressed. There is taken away the whole establishment of detail in the household; the treasurer, the comptroller, the cofferer of the household, the treasurer of the chamber, the master of the household, the whole board of green cloth, and a vast number of subordinate offices in the department of the steward of the household; the whole establishment of the great wardrobe, the removing wardrobe, the jewel office, the robes, the board of works, almost the whole charge of the civil branch of the board of ordnance are taken away.



"It

It is, Sir, because I wish to keep this business of subordinate treasuries as much as I can together, that I brought the ordnance-office before you, though it is properly a military department. For the same reason, I will now trouble you with my propositions upon two of the greatest under-treasuries, I mean the office of pay-master of the land forces, or treasurer of the army, and that of the treasurer of the navy. These offices should in future receive no more than cash sufficient for small payments: their other payments ought to be made by drafts upon the bank expressing the service. A cheque account from both offices of drafts and receipts should be annually made up in the exchequer, charging the bank in the account with the cash balance, but not demanding the payment until there is an order from the treasury, in consequence of a vote of Parliament.

For the regulation of past accounts Mr. BURKE proposed a prudent and temperate mode of settlement for the mutual benefit of the accountant and the public: he also suggested various other regulations, as checks upon the possibility of neglect, and embezzlement; and he then passed to another subordinate treasury, that of the pay-master of the pensions, which he meant to take away, and to transfer the payment to the exchequer.

After some remarks on the delicacy of attempting to abolish or diminish pensions and sinecures, Mr. BURKE confessed that there were but two offices which were properly state-offices, that he had a desire to reform. The first was the new office of *third secretary of state*, commonly called *secretary of state for the colonies*. Its business was by no means too much to be returned to either of the secretaries that remained. The other was the *board of trade and plantations*, a sort of temperate bed of influence, a sort of gently ripening hot-house, where eight members of Parliament

Parliament received salaries of 1000 *l.* per annum for a certain given time, in order to mature at a proper season, a claim to 2000 *l.* granted for doing less, and on the credit of having toiled so long in that inferior, laborious department. Here Mr. BURKE went into a history of the board, and into many demonstrations of its inutility; after which he hinted at some farther regulations in the household relative to the officers of the yeomen of the guards, and the officers and band of gentlemen pensioners, for the purpose of reforming establishments, which he said were much abused.

Such were the outlines of Mr. BURKE's plan of *reduction:* he next proposed his plan of *arrangement*, by which he meant to fix the civil list money to its several services, and to establish an invariable order in all its payments, which it should not be permitted to the first lord of the treasury, upon any pretence whatsoever, to depart from.

Towards the close of his speech, "I have not," said Mr. BURKE, "the frantic presumption to suppose, that this plan contains in it the whole of what the public has a right to expect in the great work of reformation they call for. Indeed it falls infinitely short of it. It falls short even of my own ideas. I have some thoughts not yet fully ripened, relative to a reform in the customs and excise, as well as in some other branches of financial administration. The contractor's bill of last year it is fit to revive; and I rejoice that it is in better hands than mine. The bill also for suspending the votes of custom house officers brought into Parliament several years ago, is now to be taken up by a man of real integrity, honor, and ability, who intends to carry the idea into full execution. You all see how necessary it is to review our military expences for some years past, and if possible, to bind up and close that bleeding artery of profusion; but that busi-

ness also I have reason to hope will be undertaken by abilities that are fully adequate to it. Something must be devised, if possible, to check the ruinous expence of elections. Sir, all, or most of these things must be done. Every one must take his part. If we should be able by dexterity, or power, or intrigue, to disappoint the expectations of our constituents, what will it avail us? We shall never be strong or artful enough to parry, or to put by the irresistible demands of our situation. That situation calls upon us, and upon our constituents too, with a voice which *will* be heard. I am sure no man is more zealously attached than I am to the privileges of this house, particularly in regard to the exclusive management of money. The Lords have no right to the disposition in any sense of the public purse; but they have gone further * in self-denial than our utmost jealousy could have required. A power of examining accounts, to censure, correct, and punish, we never, that I know of, have thought of denying to the house of lords. It is something more than a century since we voted that body useless: they have now voted themselves so. The whole hope of reformation is at length cast upon *us*; and let us not deceive the nation, which does us the honor to hope every thing from our virtue. If *all* the nation are not equally forward to press this duty upon us, yet be assured that they will equally expect we should perform it. The respectful silence of those who wait upon your pleasure ought to be as powerful with you, as the call of those who require your service as their right. Some without doors affect to feel hurt for your dignity, because they suppose that menaces are held out to you. Justify their good opinion by shewing that no menaces are necessary to stimulate you to your duty. But, Sir, whilst we may

* Rejection of Lord SHELBURNE's motion in the house of lords.

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sympathise with them in one point, who sympathise with us in another, we ought to attend no less to those who approach us like men, and who, in the guise of petitioners, speak to us in the tone of a concealed authority. It is not wise to force them to speak out more plainly what they plainly mean. But the petitioners are violent: be it so. Those who are least anxious about your conduct, are not those who love you most. Moderate affection and satiated enjoyment are cold and respectful; but an ardent and injured passion is tempered up with wrath, and grief, and shame, and conscious worth, and the maddening sense of violated right. A jealous love lights his torch from the firebrands of the furies. They who call upon you to belong *wholly* to the people, are those who wish you to return to your *proper* home; to the sphere of your duty; to the post of your honor; to the mansion-house of all genuine, serene, and solid satisfaction. We have furnished to the people of England (indeed we have) some real cause of jealousy. Let us leave that sort of company, which, if it does not destroy our innocence, pollutes our honor: let us free ourselves at once from every thing that can increase their suspicions, and inflame their just resentment: let us cast away from us with a generous scorn all the love-tokens and symbols that we have been vain and light enough to accept; all the bracelets, and snuff-boxes, and miniature-pictures, and hair-devices, and all the other adulterous trinkets, that are the pledges of our alienation, and the monuments of our shame. Let us return to our legitimate home, and all jars and all quarrels will be lost in embraces. Let the commons in Parliament assembled be one and the same thing with the commons at large. The distinctions that are made to separate us are unnatural and wicked contrivances. Let us identify, let us incorporate ourselves with the people.

Let us cut all the cables and snap the chains which tie us to an unfaithful shore, and enter the friendly harbour that shoots far out into the main its moles and jettees to receives us. War with the world, and peace with our constituents. Be this our motto, and our principle. Then indeed we shall be truly great. Respecting ourselves, we shall be respected by the world. At present all is troubled, and cloudy, and distracted, and full of anger, and turbulence, both abroad and at home; but the air may be cleared by this storm, and light and fertility may follow it. Let us give a faithful pledge to the people, that we honor, indeed, the crown, but that we *belong* to them; that we are their auxiliaries, and not their task-masters; the fellow-labourers in the same vineyard; not lording over their rights, but helpers of their joy; that to tax them is a grievance to ourselves, but to cut off from our enjoyments, to forward theirs, is the highest gratification we are capable of receiving. I feel, with comfort, that we are all warmed with these sentiments, and while we are thus warm, I wish we may go directly, and with a cheerful heart, to this salutary work."

The motion was seconded by Mr. FOX: but though the minister affected to give way on some points, and was left in a minority in others, yet he found means to defeat the scheme in its progress; and the bills were thrown out in that session, and in the next, but afterwards revived and passed with applause during the short administration of the Marquis of ROCKINGHAM in 1782. One of the debates on a particular clause in the plan, for abolishing the board of trade, as being only the phantom of a long-departed inefficient office, was rendered highly entertaining by an altercation between Mr. EDEN, now lord AUCKLAND, then a member of that board, and Mr. BURKE, the eloquent exposer of its inutility. Mr. EDEN informed the

committee,

committee, "that the records of the board consisted of upwards to 2,300 volumes in folio, which he would be bold to say contained much important and interesting information. It was now indeed proposed to throw them into the flames, because the honorable gentleman, who knew nothing of their contents, and declined to be informed of them, presumed they were no more than monuments of unprofitable labor. The honorable gentleman had chosen, upon a recent occasion, to call his witnesses from the dead. It was a species of proof he could not now object to. If so, he might read in those volumes the names of Mr. LOCKE, Mr. ADDISON, Mr. PRIOR, lord MOLESWORTH, and the late Mr. CHARLES TOWNSHEND, and many others of the first rank and first rate abilities, who at different times enjoyed seats at the board of trade. That respectable statesman, and most excellent man, the late Earl of SUFFOLK, could not be summoned in this case; but the honorable gentleman might indulge his sportive imagination round the tombs of LOCKE and ADDISON. He might speak epigrams on their escutcheons: he might paint their last sicknesses, without bringing the painful recollection of a departed friend, or the agonies of grief from widows, mothers, or sisters, or disgust or uneasiness to the relations of the deceased."

Mr. EDEN regretted, that he found himself under the necessity of recalling to the memory of the committee so disagreeable a subject; but as sensibility and good nature were the leading features of the honorable gentleman's character, he only referred to that part of the honorable gentleman's speech, in order to remind him, that he could not bear to see them sacrificed to the wantonness of eloquence.

"I am not a little amazed," said Mr. BURKE in reply, "at hearing myself charged with having sported with the feelings

feelings of either the widows, mothers, or sisters of the deceased. Had any thing improper been said in *the wantonness of eloquence*, as the honorable gentleman has called it, it ought to be corrected in the coolness of recollection. In talking of the late lord SUFFOLK, I neither intended to insult his memory, nor to afflict his family. God forbid I should do either the one, or the other. I declared him to be a man of honor, and directed my ridicule at his office, not at his person. When I came to that part of my argument which called for some notice of the inutility of there being more than two secretaries of state, I was naturally induced to instance the remarkable fact of the late lord SUFFOLK being incapable to discharge the duties of his office for a long time before he died, and of the office remaining vacant for near twelve months after his decease. It was on that account that I called it *widowed secretaryship*, and the *barren office*; an office first made an infirmary, and then converted into a grand cemetry, in which the bones of a secretary laid in state, and in grand funeral pomp, as in a kind of *Jerusalem Chamber*, with a hatchment over the door, and escutcheons, and lights round the corpse for a whole twelvemonth together. But surely there cannot be any man simple enough to conceive, that, when I used this figure, I meaned to be understood literally, or designed to insinuate that the corpse of the late lord SUFFOLK did actually remain in the office for such a period after his death. The idea would imply the greatest extravagance and absurdity; not but if the matter had seriously been, as I ludicrously stated it, I do not think but the office would have been made as good use of, as any use it was put to for the time mentioned. Let me now thank the honorable gentleman for his historical account of the origin and utility of the board of trade. I am ready to accept

accept that, but not his *two thousand three hundred volumes*, which I must beg to be excused from taking. I will not look into one of them. They would serve however as a monument under which both my clause and myself might be buried; and would form a funeral pile for us as large as one of the pyramids of Egypt. Alas! poor clause, if it be thy fate to be put to death, thou shalt be gloriously entombed! thou shalt lie under a splendid mausoleum! the corners of thy cenotaph shall be supported by LOCKE, by ADDISON, by PRIOR, and by MOLESWORTH."

Mr. BURKE went on for some time in this strain, and amused his hearers with a succession of images, in which the dull, senseless, sluggish contents of *two thousand three hundred volumes in folio*, large enough to fill the room he was speaking in, were contrasted with the transcendent talents, solid knowledge, and exalted characters of those great and wise men who were called in as witnesses to stamp authority upon folly, to give concurrency to dulness, and induce the committee to believe, that what was laborious was useful. Much as he respected the names of a LOCKE, an ADDISON, a PRIOR, he could not undertake to study the *two thousand three hundred volumes*, nor consider them as any part of the productions of the authors alluded to. He revered literature, but he did not wish to be overwhelmed with it. A great book was to him a great evil. The small volume of common sense, the ideas already traced out and registered in the volume of his brain, were sufficient to guide such a weak and insignificant individual as he was. He would not even look into the *two thousand three hundred folios;* and with regard to the great dead authorities cited by the honorable gentleman as having sat at the board, there was not a sinecure, nor an inefficient employment, the continuance of which he could not support, if quoting the name of some great and respectable

respectable living or dead character, who had at one time or another held either, was admitted as a sufficient argument for its being continued. "As a board of trade," added he, "I must condemn that which my clause tends to abolish; but considered as an academy of *belles lettres*, into which it is now converted, I am willing to bow my head in reverence to the great and shining talents of its several members. Every department of literature, the solid and the entertaining, the instructive and the amusing, has its separate professors. The public exercises of the academy do it honor, and render it an object of public admiration and public applause. The historian's labors, the wise and salutary result of deep religious researches [GIBBON's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire] the essence of Epistolary correspondence [EDEN's Letters to Lord CARLISLE] and the great fund of political and legal knowledge displayed by some of its members, entitle them to every mark of respect. Nor must I pass over unnoticed the poetical accomplishments of the president, lord CARLISLE, which, in an age of poetry, would have given him rank among the best of our minor poets; in this age, which is of a more serious turn, make him deservedly regarded as a great poet. To the professors themselves I owe all possible deference; and from that deference it is that I wish to rescue them from the ignominy of being degraded to a board of trade. As an academy of *belles lettres* I should hold them hallowed: as a board of trade I wish to abolish them. There is another honorable gentleman [SOAME JENNINGS] who sits at the board, and has long sat there, who is no less admired for his talents than high integrity. That gentleman, among other performances deservedly esteemed, has written on the origin of evil. I cannot say that it was the board, at which he sat, which suggested the title of his book; but surely I

may

may well say, that the honorable gentleman's long experience might have led him to know, that the board of trade was one great political evil, as it was attended with considerable expence, and was continued to increase the undue and unconstitutional influence of the crown in this house, one of the greatest political evils, or indeed the aggregate of them all. I admire the various productions of genius that have issued from individual members of that board; but I really cannot discover any utility in the enormous mass of their collected toil, in the *two thousand three hundred folios*, against the dulness of which I hope I may be allowed to quote one little book of a much humbler class, "QUARLE's *Emblems*;" a book that affords scope for the faculties to display themselves to a certain extent, and which at least possesses the merit of having some very pretty pictures in it. In QUARLE's *Emblems*, I remember to have seen a picture representing a man inclosed in a large human skeleton, designed as an emblem of death: and the man crying out, *Oh! how shall I get out of this strong death?* In this very situation I consider the great writers who now sit at the board of trade. They are immured in a skeleton which is death to the freedom of their genius, and the strong ribs of which bar them from all opportunity of taking those soaring flights they are otherwise capable of. I mean to destroy the skeleton of death and to give them liberty."

Mr. BURKE's fancy was not less fertile than QUARLE's *Emblems*, and quickly suggested to him another comparison. He viewed the board of trade as a crow's nest, in which nightingales were kept prisoners: his design, therefore, he said, was to take down the nest, and restore the nightingales to their freedom, that they might sing more delightfully. He farther observed, without any figure or allegory, that the incomes of the commissioners

were

were too great for their good. FRANCIS the First had been complained of because he founded what he called his *Parnassus*, and endowed it most amply; in consequence of which, it was said, authors were too rich to write, and the reverse of the intention of the institution was the effect of it. Literature declined in proportion as the incomes of those capable of writing became liberal. This evil Mr. BURKE meant to avoid by lopping off the board of trade in time. His pointed strictures, his figurative and historical allusions, his irony and his seriousness, his ridicule and his reasoning, seemed to produce the desired effect. After a long and warm debate, the committee divided at two o'clock in the morning, when the clause for abolishing the board of trade was approved of by a majority of 207 against 199.

Mr. BURKE's renewed attempt to carry his bill through, in the session of 1781, was rendered farther memorable by the following maiden speech of Mr. PITT, who had taken his seat for Appleby the preceding month [January] and who excited no small degree of admiration by this early specimen of his abilities.

He said, that he gave the most hearty consent to what had fallen from his honorable friend on the other side of the house—that a proposition for the retrenchment of the civil list revenue ought to have come from his Majesty's ministers. He gave his entire approbation to this sentiment. It would have come with more grace; it would have come with more benefit to the public service, if it had sprung from the royal breast. His Majesty's ministers ought to have come forward and proposed a reduction in the civil list, to give the people the consolation of knowing that their Sovereign participated in the sufferings of the empire, and presented an honorable example of retrenchment in an hour of general difficulty. They

ought to have consulted the glory of their royal master, and have seated him in the hearts of the people, by abating from magnificence what was due to necessity. Instead of waiting for the slow request of a burthened people, they should have courted popularity by a voluntary surrender of useless revenue. Far more agreeable would it have been to that house, to accede than to propose: much more gracious to have observed the free exercise of royal bounty than to make the appeal, and point out what was right, what was necessary. But if ministers failed to do this; if they interfered between the benignity of the sovereign and the distresses of his people, and stopped the tide of royal sympathy, was that a reason why the house of commons, his Majesty's public counsellors, should desist from a measure so congenial to the paternal feelings of the sovereign, so applicable to the wants and miseries of the people? The natural beneficence of the royal heart would be gratified by the seasonable remittance. And surely it was no reason, because ministers failed to do their duty, that the house should cease to attend to theirs. Acting as the faithful representatives of the people, who had trusted them, they ought to seize on every object of equitable resource that presented itself; and surely none were so fair, so probable, or so flattering, as retrenchment and economy. The obligations of their character demanded from them not to hesitate in pursuing those objects, even to the foot of the throne; and actuated by duty, to advise the crown to part with useless ostentation, that he might preserve necessary power; to abate a little of pomp, that he might ascertain respect; to diminish a little of exterior grandeur, that he might encrease and secure authentic dignity. Such advice would become them, as the counsellors of his Majesty, and as the representatives of the people; for it

7 was

was their immediate duty, as the commons house of Parliament, to guard the lives, the liberties, and the properties of the people. The last obligation was the strongest, it was more immediately incumbent upon them to guard the properties, because they were more liable to invasion by the secret and subtle attacks of influence, than either their lives, or liberties. It would not derogate from the real glory of the crown to accept of the advice. It would be no diminution of true grandeur to yield to the respectful petitions of the people. The tutelage of that house might be a hard term; but the guardianship of that house could not be disgraceful to a constitutional king. The abridgement of useless and unnecessary expence could be no abatement of royalty. Magnificence and grandeur were not inconsistent with retrenchment and economy, but, on the contrary, in a time of necessity and of common exertion, solid grandeur was dependent on the reduction of expence: And it was the general sentiment and observation of the house, that economy was at this time essentially necessary to national salvation. This had been the language of the noble lord [lord NUGENT] on the other side of the house, and he had declared that if the bill then before the house had provided that all the monies to be derived from the reductions proposed were to be applied to the public service, he would have given his hearty concurrence in it, and would have become one of its warmest advocates. Here then he begged leave to join issue with the noble lord. He had said that the savings were to be appropriated towards a fund for creating a provision for the royal family; and this clause he had found in the bill before them. He begged to inform the noble lord, that there was a clause in this bill which expressly stated that the monies arising from the reductions proposed should be directly applied

to

to the public service. The only merit that he could claim in a competition with the noble lord was, that his eyes were somewhat younger than his, and he would read the clause to which he alluded. He here read the following clause.

"And it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all salaries, lawful fees, perquisites, and profits whatsoever, belonging to all and every the offices by this act suppressed, shall cease and determine with the determination of the said offices severally, and be no longer paid; and that the commissioners of the treasury shall within a reasonable time make, or cause to be made up, an account of the salaries and fees now payable for, or on account of the said offices severally, as also an account of all the charges whatsoever, ordinary or extraordinary, incurred for or by reason of the said offices, during a certain number of years last past, and shall cause a sum to the amount of a medium of the said salaries, fees, and charges, to be annually set apart, and a separate account to be kept of the same, and to carry the said sum or sums of money, together with the amount of each and every pension as it shall fall or determine, until the said pension-list be reduced to a sum to be limited by the act (except as in this act otherwise provided to the *sinking fund*) there to remain for the disposition of Parliament."

This was the clearest refutation of the noble lord's assertions, but his error seemed to have arisen from his having taken notice of another clause in the act, which ordains, that the monies appropriated to the payment of annuities to be granted to those persons whose places were to be abolished, should be placed in a fund as they should arise by the death of the annuitants, to create a provision for the royal family. This was the error of the noble lord: he had mistaken this provision for all the

 savings

savings of the plan: unless indeed he imagined that to place money in the sinking fund subject to the disposal of Parliament, was not to apply it to the public service. He might consider the blind profusion of the minister as the public service; and unless it had been left to him to be mismanaged and squandered in his usual way, it was not applying it, in his opinion, to the public service.—He trusted the house would excuse him for having wantoned with their patience on this point; and he, for his own part, should think his time and labor very well repaid, if thereby he had been fortunate enough to gain over so powerful an assistant and friend as the noble lord, to the principle of the bill. It had been said by an honorable gentleman, who spoke early in the debate, that the bill connected two objects that ought to have been kept separate. His honorable friend [Mr. JOHN TOWNSHEND] near him had shewn, that these objects ought to go hand in hand together, and had very properly contended that this was the fit moment for introducing reform and economy. He should add, that the bill had a third object, much more important than either of these, and that was the reduction of the influence of the crown: that influence, which the last Parliament, by an express resolution, had declared to be increasing, and that it ought to be diminished: an influence which was more to be dreaded, because more secret in its attacks, and more concealed in its operations, than the power of prerogative. All these objects were not only compatible with each other, but they had a mutual connection, and ought not to be divided in a measure of reformation. In all the arguments of the noble lord who spoke last, on the subject of the resolutions of the 6th of April, he observed the noble lord's objections were directed solely to the second of these resolutions: he took it for granted therefore, that the

the noble lord admitted the first. That resolution pledged the house to do something effectual in compliance with the petitions of the people. Why then should the house refuse to adopt the present bill, the operation of which in diminishing the influence of the crown, rendered it in his opinion much more valuable than the mere consideration of the saving it would effect? But it had been said, that the saving was immaterial; it was a matter of trifling consideration, when measured by the necessities or expences of the time. It proposed to bring no more than 200,000 *l.* a year into the public coffers; and that sum was insignificant in the public account, when compared with the millions which we spend. This was surely the most singular and unaccountable species of reasoning that was ever attempted in any assembly. The calamities of the crisis were too great to be benefited by economy. Our expences were so enormous, that it was ridiculous to attend to little matters of account. We have spent so many millions, that thousands are beneath our consideration. We were obliged to spend so much, that it was foolish to think of saving any. This was the language of the day, and it was by such reasoning that the principle of the bill had been disputed. Much argument had been brought to prove the impropriety and the injustice of resuming a parliamentary grant; and it had been even said, that they had not a right to do so. It would be needless to attempt an answer to such a doctrine. It contained its refutation in its weakness. But it ought to be remembered, that the civil list revenue was granted by Parliament to his Majesty for other purposes than those of personal gratification. It was granted to support the power and the interests of the empire, to maintain its grandeur, to pay the judges and the foreign ministers, to maintain justice, and support respect; to pay the great

 officers

officers that were necessary to the lustre of the crown; and it was proportioned to the dignity and opulence of the people. It would be an ungracious task to investigate the great difference that there was between the wealth of the empire when that revenue was granted, and the wealth at the present time. It would serve however to shew, that the sum of revenue, which was necessary to the support of the common dignity of the crown and people at that time, ought now to be abated, as the necessities had increased. The people who granted that revenue under the circumstances of the occasion, were justified in resuming a part of it, under the pressing demand of an altered situation. They clearly felt their right; but they exercised it with pain and regret. They approached the throne with bleeding hearts, afflicted at the necessity of applying for retrenchment of the royal gratifications; but the request was at once loyal and submissive. It was justified by policy, and his Majesty's compliance with the request was inculcated by prudence, as well as by affection. He confessed, that, when he considered the obligations of the house, he could not cherish the idea that they would dispute the principle of the bill before them. He could not believe it possible that the principle of economy would be condemned, or the means of accomplishing it abandoned. For his own part, he admired the plan proposed. He felt himself, as a citizen of this country, and a member of that house, highly indebted to the honorable author of it; and as he considered it as essential to the being and the independence of his country, he would give it the most determined support.

On a division, the motion for the second reading was negatived—Ayes 190—Noes 233—and the bill was then put off to that day six months.

# CHAP. III.

## INFLUENCE OF THE CROWN.

IN the same session that Mr. BURKE first brought forward this great plan of œconomical reform, the house of commons resolved itself, on the motion of Mr. DUNNING, into a grand committee, in order to take into consideration the petitions of the people, when the titles being read, in all forty in number,

Mr. DUNNING said:

It was unnecessary to observe, that the subject-matter to be taken into consideration was the subject-matter contained in the petitions. Independent of the great objects, which the petitions recommended to the care and attention of Parliament, which had been according to the particular ideas of the several classes of petitioners of a various nature, there was one great fundamental point on which they hinged, that of setting limits or paring down the encreased, dangerous, and alarming influence of the crown, and an œconomical expenditure of the public money. In one point of view, both these objects might be fairly consolidated into one great principle. For instance, if the public money was faithfully applied and frugally expended, that would reduce the influence of the crown: if, on the other hand, the influence of the crown was restrained within its natural and constitutional limits, it would once more restore that power which the constitution had vested in that house, the enquiring into and controuling the expenditure of public money: but nevertheless, though the principle embraced one great

object, a necessity arose that the principle should be divided; that is, the remedy should, in pursuance of the objects held forth and recommended in the petitions, be directed to two points.

Before he proceeded any further, therefore, he should take it for granted, because the fact stood so stated in the petitions on the table, that a reform of the public expenditure, and limiting and restraining the encreasing influence of the crown, were the two great objects which must draw the attention of that house, and necessarily force those two important subjects into discussion. These being the evils set forth in the petitions, it was his duty, however unequal he might be to the task he had undertaken, to apply what he deemed specific and distinct remedies to them both; that was to propose some remedy, or frame some resolution, which would serve as a basis, on which he might afterwards erect a system of measures, to answer the purpose, and to comply with the wishes of the petitioners. Before he proceeded any further, it would be necessary for him to state, and remind the house of what had been done, as it was supposed, in consequence of the petitions now on the table; and how far those attempts had or had not succeeded; because such an enquiry would partly point out the resistance already made and avowed to the great objects of the petitions; and would have this important effect; it would shew that no redress could be, or was meant to be given to the petitioners by the modes already tried; and, at the same time, prove precisely, nay literally, in what particulars, those who were supposed to lead and direct the majorities of that house, meant to resist and defeat the prayers of the petitions. An honorable gentleman behind him [Mr. BURKE] had produced a bill partly on the plan of the petitions. It might not embrace every object described

described or pointed to in the petitions; but he believed no person on any side of the house would dispute with him, that the bill contained nothing but what was consonant to the letter and spirit of the petitions, nor excluded or determined against a syllable of their contents. He should not attempt to do that gentleman justice for his unwearied endeavours on that occasion, because, with the very best disposition to do it, he found himself totally unequal to the undertaking. He knew it would be painful to his honorable friend to hear his sentiments, while present; but as an act of duty which he thought himself bound to discharge, however irksome to his honorable friend, he could not pass over in silence what must remain as a monument to be handed down to posterity of the uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance of the honorable gentleman. He had undertaken a task big with labor and difficulty—a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive, various, and complicated; yet such was the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honorable gentleman's mind, his vast capacity, and happy conception, that, in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature, and opposite in principle, was so skilfully arranged, as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependent on each other, and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it. This was a true description of his honorable friend's bill. He trusted he would permit him to use that appellation, and it was his peculiar pride to be permitted so to do. But what was the consequence of such a bill

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brought forward by such a man? Upon its being first proposed, the united approbation of (he believed) every individual in that house. The highest, and in his opinion, the best deserved eulogiums of every part; and he believed most sincerely its genuine sentiments at the time, for he could safely make a distinction between the real sentiments of that house, permitted to act according to its own immediate feelings, and the impressions afterwards made upon it arising from without.

The house, he believed, expressed the former on the occasion alluded to; when other opinions seemed to prevail, he most sincerely believed, and was firmly persuaded, that the latter temper and disposition which appeared towards his honorable friend's bill, originated out of that house, and not within these walls. Such being the reception of the bill, or of the proposition for introducing it, what was its reception when introduced? Doubts were immediately started as soon as it made its appearance—a shew of candor, a kind of mock approbation was to be observed. It might contain some matter worthy of approbation; but it was shortly avowed by the noble lord, who is supposed to lead the majorities of this house, that the bill, as to the great objects it proposed to attain, was fundamentally wrong. What were those objects? Almost the very objects proposed to be obtained by the petitions now on the table; a reduction of the undue and unconstitutional influence of the crown, and an enquiry into the expenditure of the civil list, the abolishing sinecure places, exorbitant salaries, &c.

Whatever dexterity may have been used, some matters came out in the course of this contest, which have in fact been the occasion of the trouble I am now going to give this house.—In the course of this very important discussion, two fundamental points came into controversy,

but more of that as I proceed. The first clause in the honorable gentleman's bill, relative to the office of a third secretary of state, pursued the idea of the petitions. It went to the reduction of the public expenditure, and to the abolishing of an useless office. The noble lord in the blue ribbon, and an honorable gentleman of great abilities and of great supposed weight in this house, met both principles fairly in argument; but, at the same time, contended that the place was not useless. The noble lord in the blue ribbon said, that the influence of the crown was not too great; another noble lord [NUGENT] contended, that the influence of the crown, as stated in argument, was constitutional and necessary; and the honorable gentleman, to whom I have just alluded [Mr. RIGBY] met the other point insisted on in the petitions, the enquiry into the expenditure of his Majesty's civil list revenue, by saying it was not competent to this house. The honorable gentleman was challenged to bring his question forward: the noble lord shrunk from the contest, under the same pretext that I foresee he will endeavour to defeat or evade the resolution which I shall have the honor to move, and the honorable gentleman seemed himself not so sanguine, when the matter was decided by a question moved to take the sense of the house. Be that as it may, my honorable friend's clause was lost, under the pretence that the office proposed to be abolished was not useless, or if it was, that no evidence of its being useless had appeared. I foresee likewise, that I shall be called on for the evidence of the truth of what I shall move in this committee.

The next clause, relative to the abolition of the board of trade, was opposed on the same ostensible grounds of its not being useless. The minister, however, besides the ostensible ground, maintained both the other doctrines, that

that the influence of the crown was not too much, and that the Parliament had no right to controul the civil list expenditure; but the house was not to be drove—The house revolted, and the clause was carried by a small majority.

What was the fate of the next clause? That was openly opposed in principle; which principle was supported in one shape or other by a great majority of this house. The King's household was deemed sacred; it was not to be touched; a distinction was made by those who gave the minister that majority; useless places, which relate to the functions of the state, may be abolished; but the King's revenue for the support of his household is his own private personal revenue with which Parliament neither have, nor can have any thing to do. Here I may say my honorable friend's bill was put an end to.

The next attempt made in pursuance of the prayers of the petitions was by an honorable friend of mine [Colonel BARRE] with whom I have long lived in habits of the greatest intimacy and friendship. My honorable friend suggested the propriety of instituting a committee of accounts. This went to another part of the prayer of the petitions, the mode of collecting, transmitting, receiving, and issuing the public monies. My honorable friend, with great labor and indefatigable attention, aided by the ability and experience he is confessedly known to possess, spared no pains to render his plan as perfect as possible. A very few days had not intervened, before the noble lord in the blue ribbon, foreseeing that many things extremely irksome and unpleasant to his lordship might come out, should such a commission be instituted, run a race with my honorable friend for the bill; and without any private communication, or previous information, snatched the bill from out of the hands of my honorable

friend, where it had been placed by the unanimous voice and approbation of the house. But my honorable friend by this act, which wore in its first aspect a very suspicious appearance, and in every respect a very uncandid, ungentlemanlike appearance, had no reason to complain. Neither should I think or care about who performed the duty to the public, so it had been well and faithfully performed. Was that the case? By no means! It is true his lordship has brought in a bill, but what is it? A bill appointing commissioners to inspect the public accounts, not the accounts in general, but some particular accounts, something relative to balances. Who again are to be the commissioners appointed to execute this business? Not members of this house, but persons out of it, to be appointed by the noble lord himself. A bill of a similar nature was passed in the second of WILLIAM and MARY. In that bill it was provided, that all the public accounts, including the civil list, should be enquired into, the privy purse, and secret service money alone excepted; and this exception not to extend to persons in this house enjoying pensions. Here the civil list expenditure is totally omitted; and though it were not, no enquiry could extend to members enjoying pensions here, because the lists of those pensions have already been denied by the noble lord.

Another effort was made to diminish the influence of the crown, by an honorable gentleman [Sir P. JENNINGS CLERKE] by excluding persons holding contracts made privately with any of the official boards; which was attended with more success than either of the other two I have mentioned; so that the whole of what has been done, in consequence of that pile of parchment now on your table, containing the sentiments, the prayers, and petitions of above one hundred thousand electors, amounts in the whole

whole to a single clause in my honorable friend's bill, which standing naked, as it does, is of little or no importance: the proposition snatched out of my other honorable friend's hands by the noble lord, and only snatched to insult you in this house, and mock your constituents out of it, and the contractor's bill, which ministers, or at least their friends and confidents, pretend to predict will miscarry in another place; or should that not happen to be the case, boast that it will answer no one purpose of those who have framed and supported it. Such is the manner the dutiful and respectable petitions of the people of England have been treated. I trust, however, that the people of England, knowing how they must have been treated, will resent the insult put upon them by those, who, to oppression and neglect, have added mockery and contempt.

I would add a word or two respecting my honorable friend below me [Colonel BARRE] for the faithful and disinterested performance, respecting his duty in this house: how has he been treated by some of his opponents? He has been called a dependant: I presume, alluding to the honor he enjoys in the friendship and intimacy of a certain noble lord, a member of the other house [lord SHELBURNE]. If that intimacy and friendship be a state of dependance, I am happy in classing myself among that noble lord's dependants. I will assure those who have alluded to what they call dependance, that it is a state of dependance accompanied with perfect freedom. It is true my honorable friend has been honored with the noble lord's friendship for upwards of twenty years; but I think I know the frame of mind and disposition of my honorable friend too well to be persuaded that he would purchase any man's intimacy upon any terms short of a perfect equality, and mutual confidence; and I think I may

may likewise add, that if any person should attempt to purchase the noble lord's friendship by mean or improper concessions, there is not a man on earth would more readily see through or despise it. I know the noble lord to be a great private as well as public character. I know my honorable friend to possess a spirit of true indepedence. I am persauded of the noble lord's great and acknowledged talents as a senator and a politician; and I can add, great as he may appear in a public light, his private character is no less amiable and worthy of general admiration.

Having endeavoured, as far as lay in my power, to describe what the petitioners mean, and what adminiſtration mean; on the other hand, give me leave to recur to the ground of my present proposed resolutions. I have already observed, that the great objects of the petitioners have been resisted both in argument, and by public avowals, both by the minister and his friends. They have told you that the influence of the crown is not too much, and ought not of course to be lessened: the petitioners have asserted the direct contrary. Ministers have told you, that it is not competent for this house to enquire into the expenditure of the civil list: the direct contrary are the sentiments of the petitioners. To talk of petitions or redress is vain, idle, nugatory, and ineffectual, while these two points are maintained by those who have the majority of the house. To bring both these points fairly to issue, I mean to frame two propositions, abstracted from the petitions on your table, and to take the sense of the committee upon them. I mean that they shall be short, and as simple as possible, so as to draw forth a direct affirmative or negative. If the committee should agree with me in the resolutions, I mean to follow them up with

with real, substantial, practicable measures, but that, should they disagree, or dissent, or endeavour to evade or procrastinate, there will be at once an end of the petitions, and a full answer to the petitioners. It may be asked are my propositions to be taken from the petitions on the table? Are they to be worded in the language of this or that petition?—By no means. Some may be more extensive, others may be more full and specific: it will suffice, that my propositions will not differ from any as to the principle, though copied from none.

My first resolution will be, "that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished:" my second, "that it is competent for this house to reform the civil list, or any part of the public expenditure." Mr. DUNNING then proceeded to argue the question on the ground of notoriety, that the influence of the crown was increased, and ought to be diminished, having first regularly moved it. He supported his argument, not upon proof, which he said was idle to require, and must be decided by the consciences of those who, as a jury, were called upon to determine what was or was not within their own knowledge. He could affirm upon his own knowledge, and pledge his honor to the truth of the assertion, that he knew upwards of fifty members in that house, who voted always in the train of the noble lord in the blue ribbon, that confessed out of the house, that the influence of the crown was increased, and dangerously increased. He adduced several arguments of a similar nature, and sat down he said with this consolation, that the minority of that house, and the people at large would no longer be mocked, and insulted, with this or that management or trick, this or that evasion; for the certain alternative would be that the decision on the question

now

now proposed by him would declare, whether the petitions were to be really attended to, or finally and totally rejected.

Mr. DUNNING's first proposition was warmly supported by the speaker of the house, who declared, "that, on an occasion like the present, he should deem himself criminal in remaining silent, the resolution proposed contained an allegation which was too notorious to require proof, which in its full extent did not admit of proof: it could be known only to the members of that house; as they were the only persons competent to resolve it, they were bound as jurors by the conviction arising in their own minds, and were obliged to determine accordingly. The powers constitutionally vested in the executive part of the government were, he said, amply sufficient for all the purposes of good government, but its undue influence had increased to a degree absolutely incompatible with every just idea of a limited monarchy. What the petitioners demanded should have originated within those walls; they were sitting as the representatives of the people, solely for their advantage and benefit, and were pledged to them for the faithful discharge of their trust."

Notwithstanding the determined opposition of the minister, on the division which took place at midnight, the numbers were in favor of the motion 233—against it 215. Mr. DUNNING then moved, that it was competent to that house to examine into and correct abuses in the expenditure of the civil list, as well as in every other branch of a public revenue, whenever it shall seem expedient to the house to do so. This was again opposed by lord NORTH, who in the strongest terms expressed his wishes, that the committee would not proceed. The motion was nevertheless agreed to by the house. Mr. THOMAS PITT then moved, that it was the duty of the house to provide

provide as far as might be, an immediate and effectual redress of the abuses complained of in the petitions presented to the house from the different counties, cities, and towns in this kingdom. The minister once more earnestly implored the committee to desist, but with no effect. The motion was agreed to. It was laftly moved by Mr. Fox, that the resolutions should be immediately reported to the house, which was deprecated and protested against by lord North, as violent, arbitrary, and contrary to the established usage of Parliament. The motion however was carried, and the chairman reporting the resolutions accordingly, they were severally agreed to by the house.

On the 10th of April, the committee being resumed, Mr. Dunning congratulated the house on the late decisions; which, however, he said, could avail little unless the house proceeded effectually to remedy the grievances complained of by the people. The alarming and increasing influence of the crown being now admitted by a solemn decision of that house, it was incumbent upon them to go from generals to particulars. With a view therefore of extirpating that corrupt influence he should move that there be laid before the house every session, within seven days after the meeting of Parliament, an account of all monies paid out of the civil revenue, to, or for the use of, or interest for, any member of Parliament since the last recess This was objected to by lord North, but was carried without a division. Mr. Dunning then moved, that the persons holding the offices of treasurer of the chamber, treasurer of the household, cofferer of the household, comptroller of the household, master of the household, clerks of the green cloth, and their deputies, should be rendered incapable of a seat in that house. This was again opposed, but, on a division, was carried

carried by a majority of 215 to 213 voices. So far the patriotic party had proceeded, when the sudden illness of the speaker obliged the house to adjourn till the 24th of April, on which day the committee being resumed, Mr. DUNNING moved for an address that his Majesty would be pleased not to dissolve the Parliament, or prorogue the present session, until the objects of the petitions were answered. When the house, after a vehement debate, came to a division on this important question, it was discovered that the unfortunate illness of the speaker had infected the very life blood of their enterprize, the motion being rejected by a majority of 254 to 203. Mr. FOX rose after the division, and in the most poignant language reprobated the conduct of those men who had thus receded from the solemn engagements they had so recently entered into; and Mr. DUNNING scrupled not to charge these members with direct treachery to the nation, considering this resolution as an effectual bar to all future means and efforts of redress.

CHAP.

# CHAP. IV.

## TREASON AND SEDITION BILLS.

IN the session of 1743, the house of commons, apprised of some recent machinations of the court of St. Germain's, sent up to the Lords a bill making it High Treason to correspond with the sons of the Pretender. On the commitment of this bill, the Lord Chancellor HARDWICKE moved "that the committee be instructed to receive a clause for continuing the penalties and forfeitures legally incurred by the descendants of traitors, to the death of the sons of the Pretender; and which, by the operation of an act passed in the reigh of Queen ANNE, expired with the Pretender himself. The clause was thus opposed with equal eloquence and public spirit by the Duke of BEDFORD.

"MY LORDS.

"Though I hope that I have never given reason for suspicion, that I am less zealous than any other lord for the security of our present constitution, or the defence of the family now upon the throne; though I desire to be considered as equally zealous for liberty, and equally tenacious of those laws which secure property with every other man; though I am convinced that a Prince forced upon us by the armies and fleets of France will become only the Vice-Roy of the monarch to whom he owes his exaltation, and that we should thenceforth be considered by the French as their tributaries and their vassals, yet I cannot approve the motion which the noble lord has made.

"Your

"Your lordships cannot be surprized that I am alarmed at the proposal of a law like this, I, whose family has suffered so lately the deprivation of its rank and its fortune by the tyranny of a court; I, whose grandfather was cut off by an unjust prosecution, and whose father was condemned for many years to see himself deprived of the rights of his birth, which were at length restored to him by more equitable judges. It is surely reasonable, my lords, that I should oppose the execution of penalties to the descendants of offenders, who have scarcely myself escaped the blast of an attainder. I am very far from denying, my lords, what has been asserted, that the French have long been aspiring to universal monarchy; that they consider their projects as liable to be defeated only by the English; and that they have therefore for many years labored, to give a King to England; but, my lords, the ill success of all their past attempts convinces me, that they have nothing to hope from any future efforts of the same kind, and that therefore we need not have recourse to new degrees of severity, or enact penal laws of an extraordinary kind to prevent that which experience has shewn impossible to be accomplished.

"What could not be accomplished by the power or the policy of the great French monarch, may, very justly, be considered by his successor as an hopeless project; for the French counsels do not now appear to be guided by the wisdom which at that time was discovered in all their treaties and negotiations, nor have their arms yet acquired that reputation which filled half the nations of the world with terror. They are not able now to influence kingdoms by their manifestos, or to revive a dejected party by the promise of their assistance: they are now indeed wealthy and powerful, but they are not weal-

thy to such a degree as to hire the nation to destroy itself, nor so powerful as to sink it to despair.

Besides, not only the force which is to be employed against the fabric of our constitution is diminished; but the edifice is grown stronger by time, the basis is sunk deeper, the superstructure is become more solid, and all the parts have by degrees conformed to each other, so that there is no chasm or weakness to be found. Many circumstances, by which the French were formerly induced to hope for success have now vanished for ever. The nation was then divided into two parties, of which that which publicly avowed the desire of restoring the exiled family to the throne, was generally computed to be more numerous. This infatuation, my lords, is now at an end: the numbers of the Jacobites are reduced to a small set below consideration, and seem now more desirous to enjoy their opinions in peace and privacy, than to make proselytes; and to be tolerated by the lenity of the government, than to endanger themselves by new provocations.

The English people, my lords, are now consolidated into one body, and more uniformly together; they have at last discovered that nominal distinctions are only idle sound, by which they have been long amused by more parties than one, while they were plundered, and oppressed. And whosoever shall review the conduct of the people for about twenty years backward, shall find that they have every year appeared better informed of the true nature of our government, and that they have sacrificed all narrow views and petty considerations to the great scheme of general felicity; that they have acted steadily, resolutely, and wisely; and that in their regard for one man, or their opposition to another, they have

considered truly how far the public good was promoted or obstructed by their counsels.

On the present occasion, my lords, they have given the fullest proof of their loyalty which they are able to exhibit, by innumerable addresses sent from all parts, and drawn up in terms which express the firmest fidelity and warmest affections,—professions, my lords, which surely deserve some other return than the severity of a penal law, a law by which one person is condemned to suffer for the crime of another. As it is necessary, my lords, that subjects should obey their governors, so it is likewise reasonable, that governors should trust their subjects; at least that they should not studiously disgust them by groundless suspicions; for when the people see that no degree of obedience can recommend them to regard, they will naturally lose their affection for their superiors; and when their affection is once extinguished, if they do not violate their duty, they will at least neglect it. To be suspected, my lords, is always offensive, and as a suspicious man is perpetually harassing himself with superfluous vigilance, disturbing his quiet with dreams of danger, and wearying himself by providing securities against violence or fraud which never was designed, so a suspicious government always defeats its own endeavours, and by destroying that popularity to which it must always trust for its defence in time of real danger, weakens itself. The multiplication of penal laws, the establishment of armies, and the distribution of pensions, the usual methods by which weak governments endeavour to strengthen their basis, are all transitory and uncertain supports, which the first blast of general discontent may drive before it, and which have a tendency to produce that rage which they cannot furnish the means of resisting. I think it therefore necessary, my lords, to oppose

 this

this motion, because I think it my duty to preserve the government from the greatest of all evils, the loss of popularity; and am of opinion that ten thousand penal laws cannot so much contribute to the perpetual establishment of the royal family, as one act of confidence, condescension, or bounty, by which the affections of the people may be conciliated.

But this, my lords, is not the only argument against it, by which I am inclined to deny my concurrence. It ought to be always remembered, and by me shall not be easily forgotten, that we are here assembled to deliberate, not for any particular purposes or narrow plans, but for the great end of society, the general happiness; that, as we are not to gratify the caprices of the people by vilifying the dignity or restraining the power of the throne, so we are not to appease the suspicions of the throne by sacrificing the safety or honor of the people: we are to support our sovereign, indeed, but not by such means as destroy the ends by which sovereignty was established, the public welfare, and common security. The motion is therefore, in my opinion, wholly indefensible, because, though it should be granted that it may add some security to the throne, it must in proportion impair the happiness of the people, as it must fill the nation in this time of general commotion with anxiety, and oblige almost every man to the unnatural and unavailing care of watching the conduct of another, and at last must involve thousands in undeserved misery, by punishing them for crimes which they did not commit, and which they could not prevent, and inflicting penalties, therefore, which can have no other effect than that of enriching, by forfeitures, the minions of the court. These reasons, my lords, are surely sufficiently powerful to justify me in opposing the motion; and yet there remains another, which perhaps

may, when it is fully examined, appear equally weighty. Notwithstanding the happiness of our present state, the protection of our rights, and the security of our property; notwithstanding the confidence which may be reposed in the equity, the moderation, and the wisdom of his Majesty, and the hopes which we may reasonably have of being governed to all succeeding ages by his illustrious descendants with the same justice, magnanimity, and prudence, yet I am not confident that these hopes may not be disappointed. I know not any evidence, by which I can ascertain the continuance of these blessings, or by which I can prove to the people of England, that there never will come a time in which a superstitious, an ambitious, or a tyrannical prince may once more attempt the subversion of their rights, the seizure of their properties, or the abolition of their religion. I am not certain that our constitution is so strongly built that it can never want repairs, or that our laws are so judiciously formed, as that they may not become, in the hands of rapacity, the tools of avarice, or in the hands of cruelty the scourge of oppression. Whenever this fatal period shall arrive, it must be granted, my lords, that another revolution will be necessary, and that every law, which shall hinder the people from making use of the only remedy which then remains, will obstruct the public happiness, and counteract the great design of government; and surely, my lords, a law which involves the son in the guilt of his father, must naturally extinguish that ardor of patriotism by which all revolutions have been accomplished. For who will be found sufficiently hardy to oppose the crown, when, if he should happen to fail, he must not only perish as a traitor, but sink his whole posterity in poverty and disgrace? Since therefore, my lords, it appears to me not more likely that the king

of England will be in danger from his subjects, than that the people of England will be in danger from their King. I think it convenient to hold the balance equal between them; as I would not give the people any exemption which might encourage them to rebel, I would give the crown no such prerogatives as may encourage any future monarchs to oppression.

"Thus, my lords, I have laid before you the arguments which influence me to disapprove the motion; and which will, I believe, determine me to vote against it; for though I am desirous to secure the throne, I would not willingly secure it by disarming the people, but by placing them as guards before it. The dependence of the monarch and the subjects ought to be on reciprocal affection and mutual assistance, and therefore neither ought to imagine that any increase of safety is to be obtained by diminishing the legal privileges of one, or violating the natural rights of the other."

The clause, however, was received after a long and vehement opposition.

In consequence of the outrageous insults offered to the King's person the first day of the session, in October 1795, lord GRENVILLE presented to the Upper House a bill for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts.

Whatever variations, his lordship observed, there might be in this bill from the precedents of former times, he assured their lordships, that they would be found only to deviate so far as the peculiar forms of existing circumstances required. The precedents, to which he referred, were those in the reign of ELIZABETH, and CHARLES II. and he doubted not but their lordships would agree with him in the necessity there was of applying a speedy

remedy

remedy to those dangerous practices, which had endangered not only the constitution, but the life of the sovereign.

When the bill was under discussion in the committee, where it underwent a variety of softenings, lord THURLOW exerted himself to prove how superfluous, as well as odious it was altogether. The language of the bill this great lawyer asserted to be vague, indefinite, and highly dangerous to the subject; and he gave it as his decided opinion, that the present laws of the country were fully adequate to the punishment of the crimes, which the bill was professedly framed to embrace, and that it could in no degree conduce to the safety of the king, or the preservation of the constitution. The bill in question, exclusive of its creating a chaos of treasons, in the same spirit of tyranny, increased the punishment which the law had provided for the crime of sedition, enacting that on a second conviction the offender shall be liable to transportation for the term of seven years.

The duke of BEDFORD expressed in strong language his abhorrence of the spirit and principle of the bill, and particularly of this clause, which he regarded as a wanton outrage upon the subject. What might not be construed into sedition? "and who," said his grace, "could consider himself so wholly uninterested in the operation of this clause, now that the good times of CHARLES II. were made the example to copy after?" The duke animadverted in pointed terms upon the extraordinary declaration of HORSELEY, Bishop of Rochester, in the course of the debate, "that speculative, and philosophical disquisitions upon the subject of government, though they might be *allowed*, did more harm than good: but that the public discussions of such topics ought to be prevented; and that he did not know in fact, what the mass of the

people in any country had to do with the laws but to obey them." "This doctrine," his grace said, "in the mouth of a mufti might be attributed to ignorance, but when pronounced in the legislature of this free country by the lips of a British prelate, must excite amazement and indignation."

A few days after, Mr. PITT introduced into the lower house a bill for the more effectually preventing of seditious meetings and assemblies, stating that the circumstances, upon which he meant to ground the proceedings of that night, had made so deep an impression on the mind of every gentleman in that house, as well as on that of every man in the country, that it would not be necessary for him to make any comments on them. The public had seen with becoming indignation, that a virtuous and beloved sovereign had been attacked in the most criminal and outrageous manner, and at a time too when he was in the exercise of the greatest and most important function of kingly capacity, when he was going to assemble the great council of the nation, that great and indeed only resource against every national evil. The first impulses of every man's mind after an attack so immediately directed against the life of the king of these realms, must be those of horror and detestation of the wicked, the diabolical wretches, who, in contempt of the respect and reverence due to the sacred character of their sovereign, in contempt of the whole legislature, by a kind of concentred malice, directed a blow at once at its three branches, in attempting to assassinate a mild and benignant monarch, who was the great cement and center of our glorious constitution. In contemplating this calamity, the house would feel that some correction must be given to the laws at present in force against such crimes: means must be found to repress the spirit which gave

gave birth to so daring an outrage, and to prevent such unprecedented consequences of sedition, and of sedition too leading to assassination by the most despicable, as well as the most dangerous, of all modes of attack, against the vital principles of the state in the person of the sovereign. If, under this first impression, every man should think himself called upon (as he was sure would be the case) by the loyalty and allegiance he owed to the sovereign office, and by affection to the person of the sovereign, by the reverence due to religion, by self-preservation itself, and the happiness of society at large, to apply a remedy to those very alarming symptoms, another impression would arise out of it, equally forcible, and equally obvious, namely, that they would do this business but by halves, and act carelessly and ineffectually, if they directed their attention only to that separate act, and not to those very mischievous and formidable circumstances, which were connected with it, in point of principles, and which produced it, in point of fact.

In endeavouring to lead the attention of the house to the remedies which appeared to him most likely to be efficient to this purpose, he would not advert to legal distinctions, but to prudential principles. If the house viewed the separate act with that eye of horror he conceived they must, and if viewing it so, they felt the conviction, that a repetition of such enormities should be prevented immediately; the next point that would impress itself upon their minds, as arising from the two former, was, that they should adopt some means to prevent these seditious assemblies, which served as vehicles to faction and disloyalty, which fanned and kept alive the flame of disaffection, and filled the minds of people with discontent. He had the most indubitable proof to support him in saying, that this sentiment not only pervaded that house,

house, but all the kingdom; and that in no one instance that had ever occurred were the commons called upon more loudly by the wishes and prayers of an anxious community, than they were at this time by the people of England, to avert the ruin with which those assemblies menaced the country, by preventing their further proceedings. In full hopes that the house felt the force of these impressions as forcibly as he did, and would agree to some such measure as he had alluded to, his motion of that day would go to that object. It might perhaps occur to gentlemen, that a law should be previously made for the protection of his Majesty's person; but he informed them, that the other house had now under its consideration a bill to that effect, which he hoped would soon be laid before them for their concurrence. His motion, therefore, was not directed to alter or enforce the laws of the king's safety, but to prevent those meetings, to which all the mischiefs he had mentioned were attributable.

The meetings, to which he alluded, were, he said, of two descriptions; under the first of those descriptions fell those meetings, which, under a pretext (to which they by no means adhered) of petitioning Parliament for rights of which they affected to be deprived, agitated questions, and promulgated opinions and insinuations hostile to the existing government, and tending to bring it into disrepute with the people. The other description, though less numerous, not less public, nor less dangerous, were concerted evidently for the purpose of disseminating unjust grounds of jealousy, discontent, and false complaints against the constitution, of irritating the minds of the people against their lawful governors, and of encouraging them to acts of even treason itself. In these meetings every thing that could create faction, every thing that could

could excite disloyalty, every thing that could prepare the minds of those who attended for rebellion, was industriously circulated. Both these required some strong law to prevent them; for if the arm of the executive government was not strengthened by such a law, they would be continued, if not to the utter ruin, certainly to the indelible disgrace of the country.

As to the first of those descriptions, no one would venture to deny the right of the people to express their opinions on political men and measures, and to discuss and assert their right of petitioning all the branches of the legislature; nor was there any man who would be farther from encroaching on that right than himself. It was undoubtedly a most valuable privilege, of which nothing should deprive them. But, on the other hand, if meetings of this kind were made the mere cover or pretext for acts which were as inconsistent with the liberty of the subject, as it was possible to imagine any thing to be; if instead of stating grievances, the people were excited to rebellion; if instead of favoring the principles of freedom, the very foundation of it was to be destroyed, and with it the happiness of the people, it was high time for the legislature to interpose with its authority.

This consideration, he confessed, occasioned considerable difficulty, but it did not create an insuperable dilemma. In applying the desired remedy, two things were to be looked to; the first, to correct the abuse of a sacred and invaluable privilege; the second, to preserve that privilege inviolate: caution was therefore necessary, lest, on the one hand, they should encroach on the rights of the people, or, on the other, should suffer the abuse of those rights to become their total extinction. This was a matter of great delicacy, and should be attended to in the detail; but the house would see that at present the real question

question was, " Did not the pressure of the moment call for *some* remedy?" According to opinions which he had collected as well as he had been able from others, and such as he had formed for himself, the great point wanted at this moment was a more clear and defined power in the magistrate to disperse and put an end to all meetings likely to be productive of consequences such as were already mentioned. He by no means meant this power of dispersion to extend to meetings professedly and obviously lawful, and held for legal and constitutional purposes; but that in every case of a numerous meeting of whatever nature, or under whatever color, notice should be given so as to enable the magistrate to keep a watchful eye over their proceedings. He should therefore propose, that whatever be the pretext of a public meeting (if the house was at all of opinion there was any necessity for a regulation of such meetings) such notice should be given to the magistrate in order that he might attend for the preservation of the public peace; that he might watch the proceedings to prevent any measure that might tend to attack or to bring into contempt either the sovereign himself, or any branch of the established government of the country. That the magistrate should be empowered to apprehend any persons whose conduct should be calculated for those purposes, and that any resistance to the authority of a magistrate, so acting, should be deemed felony in every person concerned in it. That on perceiving the proceedings of such meeting to be tumultuous, and leading to the bad consequences he had already mentioned, the magistrate should have power similar to that which he had already by the riot act; to disperse that assembly; and that after reading the riot act, and ordering them to disperse, any number of persons remaining should, as by the riot act, incur the penalty of the law, that of felony. The house would

would see that this summary power in the magistrate, while it would still leave to the people the fair right to petition, on the one hand, would, on the other, prevent the abuse of it. This he said was the outline. All detail he would reserve for future discussion.

Under the other description of meetings through which the minds of the people are poisoned, fell those of public lectures, who made the dissemination of sedition the source of livelihood. To them he thought it would be proper to apply regulations, something like those that passed about fourteen years ago, in an act, which from the learned gentleman who brought it in, was called MANSFIELD's act, and by which all houses, wherein meetings of an improper kind were held on a Sunday, were to be treated as disorderly houses. And to avoid evasion, the clause should apply to every house wherein any people met, exceeding, by a certain number to be stated in the act, the real family of the house. "These," said he, "are the outlines of the measure I have to propose; and so convinced am I that there can be but one feeling, and one opinion, that some measure of this kind is necessary, [here a cry of *hear*, from the opposite side] and so little am I shaken in that conviction by the adverse vociferations of *hear! hear!* that I am sure I should but shew a distrust of the cause, if I said any more. I will therefore only move,

"That leave be given to bring in a bill for the more effectually preventing of seditious meetings and assemblies."

No sooner had the motion been read by the speaker than Mr. Fox rose, and declared that the indignation he felt at the atrocious insult offered to the king was not inferior to that of any man; but he should do injustice to his feelings were he not to avow, that it was equalled by the

the indignation he experienced in consequence of the motion he had just heard. If Mr. Pitt meant to found this execrable measure on the flimsy pretext of the public meetings lately held in the vicinity of the metropolis, let him at least make some attempt to prove the connection between them. That the violence offered to his Majesty was the result of these meetings, there existed no color of evidence. It seemed to be the object of the mover of this bill to bring the public gradually to submit to the most rigid despotism. If the principle of this measure were admitted by the house, Mr. Fox protested that in the discussion of the detail he would take no part. Public meetings for the discussion of public topics were not only lawful, but of the very essence of the constitution, and Englishmen had immemorially enjoyed this liberty. Now it seems they are no longer to do so, unless notice be given to a magistrate empowered to arrest any person, whom in his wisdom he might deem seditious; and who had the authority to dissolve the meeting by the *fiat* of his own will. Say at once, that a free constitution is no longer suitable to England! Conduct yourselves as the senators of Denmark formerly did! Renounce your liberties; and accept of despotism! but do not mock the understanding and feelings of mankind by telling the world you are free. Can a meeting, under such restraints as the bill imposes and requires, be called a meeting of freemen? Will the people of this country suffer their feelings to be thus insulted? Or is it possible they can regard this measure in any other light than as a total extinction of their liberty? He trusted that the people would be alarmed at the prospect of the state preparing for them, and that they would assemble while they might, to concert the means of averting a stroke so fatal. Those who fail to do so, he pronounced traitors to their country.

He

He declared his resolution, if this bill was persisted in, of moving a call of the house.

The Bill was ordered in by a majority of 214 to 42 voices.

On the second reading of the sedition bill, Mr. Erskine distinguished himself by some very animating remarks against it. "An act of this description," he said, "was never thought of in the reign of King CHARLES II. after all the horrors and confusion of the former reign. It was never attempted in the reign of King WILLIAM, when the government was newly established during a disputed succession; or in either of the two subsequent reigns, when rebellions raged in the heart of the kingdom. He defied the whole profession of the law to prove that the bill then before the house, was consonant to the principles of the constitution. The constitution was abrogated and annulled by it. Our ancestors were content to wait till some overt-act appeared, which was the subject of punishment; but under this bill the determination of a magistrate was to interfere between the people and the assertion of their rights, or the complaint of their grievances. How easy would it be for the spy of a corrupt magistrate, by going to a meeting, and uttering a few seditious words, whether apposite to the subject, or not, to afford a pretence for dissolving the meeting. The law of the land," this great constitutional lawyer affirmed, "was fully adequate to all the purposes of good government, without the introduction of the present measure. In any public meeting when a breach of the peace was committed, a magistrate, by the existing law, was entitled to interfere, and in his support was authorized to raise the *posse comitatus*, if necessary; and also by the Riot act he had the power of dispersing tumultuous assemblies. The minister was now attempting to brand with the imputation

putation of sedition all those who employed the same language which Mr. PITT himself had once held. But under the sanction of the venerable father of this apostate minister, the great earl of CHATHAM, he would maintain that the people of England might, and ought to defend their rights if necessary, by the last extremity to which free men could resort. For my part," exclaimed this celebrated advocate of the constitution, " I shall never cease to struggle in support of liberty. In no situation will I desert the cause. I was born a free man. I will never die a slave."

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

Strahan and Preston,
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